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ABSTRACT

This English-as-a-Second Language (ESL) journal periodically devotes entire issues to specific themes. The theme of this issue is "Intersegmental Articulation" (especially in California schools). Articles include: "Why Is ESL a Burning Issue?" (Robby Ching, Anne Ediger, Debbie Poole); "Challenges Facing California ESL Students and Teachers across the Segments" (Gari Browning); "The Elementary-Secondary Transition: Issues in Articulation" (Sara Fields, Susan Dunlap); "Articulation between Segments: Secondary to Postsecondary Programs" (Linda Sasser); "Noncredit Students in California Community Colleges: A Community at Risk" (Margaret Manson); "Passages between the Community College and the California State University" (Robby Ching, Sue McKee, Rebecca Ford); "ESL Students Entering the University of California" (Janet Lane, Donna Brinton, Melinda Erickson); "Articulation Agreements between Intensive ESL Programs and Postsecondary Institutions" (Bill Gaskill); "Secondary Education in California and Second Language Research: Instructing ESL Students in the 1990s" (Robin Scarcella); "The Challenge of Articulating ESL Courses in Postsecondary Education: Policy and Legislative Issues" (Kathryn Garlow); "Is Remediation an Articulation Issue?" (Denise Murray); "University of California Responses to the Needs of Students: 1983-1996" (Marianne Celce-Murcia, Tippy Schwabe); "Teaching Analytical Writing to ESL Students: UCLA/High School Collaboration?" (Faye Peitzman); "Articulation or Collaboration?" (Denise Murray); "Establishing Partnerships: The San Diego County ESL Articulation Group" (Anne Ediger); "Building Bridges: Articulating Writing Programs between Two- and Four-Year Colleges" (Kim Flachman, Kate Pluta); "Noncredit to Credit Articulation: The City College of San Francisco Model" (Sharon Seymour, Nadia F. Scholnick, Nina Gibson); "Adult School to Community College: The Fremont Adult School-Ohlone College Model" (Mark Lieu); "Articulation between a Private Language School and Other Academic Institutions: The Case of ESL Language

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Centers/San Diego" (Jim Scofield, Vince Burns); and "In Their Own Voices" (Margaret Loken). (MSE)

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# CONTENTS

*INTRODUCTION*

**Why Is ESL a Burning Issue?** ..... 7
Robby Ching, Anne Ediger, and Debbie Poole

*OVERVIEW OF ARTICULATION ISSUES*

**Challenges Facing California ESL Students and Teachers Across the Segments** ..... 15
Gari Browning

*MOVEMENT ACROSS SEGMENTS: ISSUES AND CONCERNS*

**The Elementary-Secondary Transition: Issues in Articulation** ..... 47
Sara Fields, Susan Dunlap

**Articulation Between Segments: Secondary to Postsecondary Programs** ..... 61
Linda Sasser

**Noncredit Students in California Community Colleges: A Community at Risk** ..... 75
Margaret Manson

**Passages Between the Community College and the California State University** ..... 79
Robby Ching, Sue McKee, and Rebecca Ford

**ESL Students Entering the University of California** ..... 99
Janet Lane, Donna Brinton, and Melinda Erickson

**Articulation Agreements Between Intensive ESL Programs and Postsecondary Institutions** ..... 117
Bill Gaskill

*RELATED ISSUES*

**Secondary Education in California and Second Language Research: Instructing ESL Students in the 1990s** ..... 129
Robin Scarcella

**The Challenge of Articulating ESL Courses in Postsecondary Education: Policy and Legislative Issues** ..... 153
Kathryn Garlow

**Is Remediation an Articulation Issue?** ..... 175
Denise Murray

**University of California Responses to the Needs of Students: 1983–1996** ..... 183
Marianne Celce-Murcia and Tippy Schwabe

*Existing Models of Articulation*

**Teaching Analytical Writing to ESL Students: UCLA/High School Collaboration** ..... 199
Faye Peitzman

**Articulation or Collaboration?** ..... 207
Denise Murray

**Establishing Partnerships: The San Diego County ESL Articulation Group** ..... 215
Anne Ediger

**Building Bridges: Articulating Writing Programs Between Two- and Four- Year Colleges** ..... 227
Kim Flachman and Kate Pluta

**Noncredit to Credit Articulation: The City College of San Francisco Model** ..... 237
Sharon Seymour, Nadia F. Scholnick, and Nina Gibson

**Adult School to Community College: The Fremont Adult School-Ohlone College Model** ..... 247
Mark Lieu

**Articulation Between a Private Language School and Other Academic Institutions: The Case of ESL Language Centers/San Diego** ..... 253
Jim Scofield and Vince Burns

*Student Voices*

**In Their Own Voices** ..... 259
Margaret Loken

**Guest Editors and Contributors** ..... 271

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The CATESOL Journal

# EDITORS' NOTE

This third theme issue of *The CATESOL Journal* concerns a topic that is especially critical in California's schools today: intersegmental articulation. We would like to thank Anne Ediger for initially suggesting that we devote an issue of the journal to this topic along with its ramifications for California's English language learners. We would also like to express our sincerest appreciation to this issue's guest editors—Robby Ching, Anne Ediger, and Deborah Poole. Their very dedicated efforts on behalf of the journal has resulted in an issue that we know will be of great interest to the CATESOL readership.

Peter Master
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The CATESOL Journal

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# Why ESL Articulation Is a Burning Issue

With this special theme issue on articulation, *The CATESOL Journal* focuses on a topic which is rapidly becoming critical in the education of English language learners in California. Traditionally, *articulation* has referred to the formal intersegmental agreements developed between institutions at various levels in higher education (community colleges and 4-year colleges or universities) in which courses at the respective colleges or universities were judged to be equivalent or to meet certain standards of rigor or content. In most cases, it was the higher level institution which required the meeting of certain standards by the lower level institutions.

Although articulation in this formal, bureaucratic sense has long been a feature of movement across our educational segments, this volume brings into focus the essential role of grass roots practitioners in achieving its goals. Taken together, these articles suggest that the kind of intersegmental articulation which dictates solely in a top down fashion can no longer be viewed as adequate. As a result, the concept of articulation can be expanded considerably beyond the traditional definition to include a broader range of intersegmental agreements, negotiations of standards, and collaboration among ESL teaching professionals across the segments. But why focus on articulation now?

## Recent Initiatives

The need for second language (L2) educators to communicate across segments and levels is evidenced in a number of developments which coincide with publication of this theme issue. The most closely related of these is the intersegmental document *California Pathways*, (ESL Intersegmental Project, 1996; see Browning, this issue) which has now been endorsed by

the academic senates of all three segments of higher education, the California Community Colleges (CCC), the California State University (CSU), and the University of California (UC). *California Pathways* consolidates a wide range of information about the immigrant and second language student population in California, the second language acquisition process, and policies and practices in the four segments (secondary, CCC, CSU, and UC) that affect second language students. The document also includes proficiency level descriptors for the four skill areas, providing California educators across the segments with a common language with which to talk about the skills of their students. As an intersegmental effort, *California Pathways* represents an important model of cooperation between institution and practitioner since it was commissioned by the Intersegmental Council of Academic Senates (ICAS),[1] but was written by 10 ESL practitioners from throughout the state.

During the last few years while *California Pathways* (ESL Intersegmental Project, 1996) was being developed, TESOL, as an international professional organization of ESL practitioners, was also bringing together professionals from the across the elementary and secondary segments to undertake the development of ESL standards for Pre-K–12 ESL instruction. A version of these standards was released at the 1996 TESOL Conference in Chicago, [2] and efforts to revise and fine-tune them continue. In addition to these standards, TESOL is also preparing ESL assessment guidelines and curriculum development documents which are intended to provide a framework for infusing the standards into district- and state-level ESL curricula and assessment procedures, provide teachers with ideas for translating the standards into classroom practice, and aid in teacher training efforts.

In Canada, similar efforts over recent years have resulted in the development of the first phase of a document known as the "Canadian Language Benchmarks." The effort began in 1990 when the Canadian federal governments' Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) office undertook to develop a set of language benchmarks, "a description of a person's ability to use the English language to accomplish a set of tasks" (National Working Group on Language Benchmarks, 1996a, p. I) in order to help "the adult newcomer to Canada who needs language skills to achieve integration into Canadian society" (p. I). In addition to the basic Benchmarks documents, another related document is in the process of being developed—the Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment. [3]

In California, an important development which heightened the urgency of intersegmental articulation and cooperation occurred in the Fall of 1995, when the CSU trustees proposed to end remediation in the CSU

system. In the initial proposal, many ESL courses were included within the general category of remediation (see Murray; and Ching, McKee & Ford, this volume). An outpouring of opposition to this proposal and a rather thorough airing of the issues involved in ESL instruction at the university level resulted in a final proposal that explicitly recognized ESL courses as developmental rather than remedial and that included ESL students among the categories of students to be exempted from a general cutback in remediation. At the same time, the CSU trustees called for increased articulation among the segments, recognizing the need for each segment to better understand the needs and expectations of other segments. They affirmed the belief that such understanding would result in better preparation of students.

A new development in the standards arena is the release by the California Education Round Table (1997) of a document, *Standards in English and Mathematics for California High School Graduates.*[4] Responding directly to the concerns of the CSU trustees, it is designed to "make clear what is expected of them [high school students] by the time they complete their high school careers" (California Round Table, p. iii). The standards it sets are laudable as goals; however, many L2 students entering the K–12 system at various points and with varying degrees of L1 literacy will be unable to demonstrate mastery of these standards by the time of graduation. For example, according to the *Standards*, "the student appropriately uses the conventions of standard English in oral presentations, including:

2.1 vocabulary for specific audiences and settings;
2.2 grammar of standard spoken English;
2.3 conventional sentence structure for spoken English;
2.4 intonation appropriate for questions and statements;
2.5 conventional word stress patterns for spoken English (p. 58).

In other words, L2 students should be proficient in standard spoken English by the time they graduate from high school. Similarly, they should write without an "accent" in a variety of genres as well as perform other complex, language-based tasks. Although recognizing that language learning is developmental, the document asserts, "the English content standards establish expectations for *all* students" (California Education Round Table, 1997, p. 46).

Commonly agreed upon standards (similar to those of this document) that reach across the segments can be of great benefit to L2 students as well as others. However, standards that are unrealistic and that fail to take into adequate account the nature of second language acquisition may have adverse and unforeseen effects.

## Emerging Themes

Across the collection of articles in this volume, a number of the same themes recur. Among the most consistent to emerge is the recognition that the goals and assumptions of the California Master Plan for higher education (Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education, 1987) are often unrealistic. The California Master Plan assumes that students at each level of postsecondary education in California will receive equivalent preparation and that the general education that students receive in each of the three postsecondary segments will equally and adequately prepare them for upper division university study in the disciplines. The Master Plan, however, provides no mechanism for how this will be achieved. Differences in class size, teacher training, and institutional support affect the ability of the different levels to accomplish the same task. Furthermore, second language students enter the system at different points yet are expected to achieve equal levels of proficiency by the time they exit, and as the articles included in the volume illustrate, policies and practices seldom take into account the time required to acquire academic proficiency in a second language. These realities have all contributed to the difficulties students encounter as they move across segments. In many instances they are viewed as underprepared by the receiving segment, and they are often reclassified as ESL in spite of having exited an ESL program at the previous level.

A related issue discussed by a number of the authors is the variation and inconsistency within each segment. Virtually every segment from K–12 to the University of California is characterized by wide variation in terms of L2 practices. For some segments, this situation exists because few if any systemwide guidelines concerning ESL students are in place. In others, the guidelines and policies are not sufficiently specific, resulting in a broad range of actual practices. The message of the volume thus becomes even more complex as we learn that articulation across segments must be accompanied by a move toward more consistency and communication within them as well.

On a more positive note, another recurring theme is that the most effective articulation comes from ESL practitioners working together. For example, in "Is Remediation an Articulation Issue?" Murray argues that "change only occurs when faculty from across segments collaborate as equal partners." It requires looking at the realities of student experiences and the forces motivating them or holding them back from moving from one level to the next (see, for example, Seymour, Scholnick, & Gibson; and Loken, this volume). Repeatedly, the authors document how a new kind of articulation emerges from the exchange of knowledge about each other, our stu-

dents, and our institutions, and from the sense of trust that develops over time as we work together. As Flachman and Pluta report, "Building Bridges" is an appropriate metaphor for articulation because through it we begin "to build bridges of communication, understanding, and respect."

Collaboration on the part of ESL professionals is essential for articulation to be successful, but it is only half the picture. Institutional and intersegmental support is necessary for articulation to become intrinsic to ESL education in California. Yet another recurrent theme of this volume is the massive amount of time and effort required for articulation projects to take place. More often than not in the past, these projects have been volunteer efforts, carried out by participants with limited resources. Flachmann and Pluta's project included funding to pay for assigned time for the directors as well as paying presenters and participants; however, Murray's grant only paid for supplies, data analysis by a statistician, payment of essay readers, and a graduate student from SJSU to coordinate the project. Not surprisingly, the project came to a halt when funding ran out. Ediger's group had funding to pay the participants removed from its grant because articulation was regarded as part of their jobs. Other efforts had no funding at all. Without adequate and ongoing funding, articulation efforts will either be restricted to the occasional conference where a "higher" segment tells a "lower" segment what it expects, or to localized, short-term, collaborative projects that can be carried out by a few committed individuals but which leave untouched the vast majority of ESL programs and teachers in the state.

**Organizational Rationale**

The articles in this volume have been organized to bring intersegmental concerns into focus. Following Browning's important overview, which highlights the important articulation issues addressed in *California Pathways* (ESL Intersegmental Project, 1996), the first major section addresses issues faced by students as they move from one segment or institution to another throughout California. Hence, each of the major transitions (e.g., elementary to secondary, secondary to community college, community college to CSU or UC) is discussed and dealt with in a separate article. The second section of the volume focuses on a range of issues closely linked to articulation. These include remediation, legal and policy regulations, and second language acquisition. Collectively, these articles point to some of the factors which must be taken into account if future articulation efforts are to be more successful. The third major section provides models of articulation initiated through the efforts of practitioners and colleagues across segments and institutional contexts. A number of these models have resulted in highly successful (and institutionalized) outcomes with long-

term consequences for student movement or transfer. Others have been less successful in terms of concrete results although the intangible benefits of gaining professional understanding of other levels have been highly valued by every author. The volume closes with a collection of student stories which depict the student perspective on moving through the segments of California's educational system. These pieces, collected and brought together by Margaret Loken, illustrate the student perspective on many of the points made elsewhere in the volume.

## A Call for Action

This volume is a source of ideas and inspiration for articulation, but it is also a call for action. Those who determine educational policy for California must recognize that much is amiss with how our second language learners currently move through the educational system. They must make articulation a priority at all levels and in all locations and provide the support needed to make articulation meaningful. They must recognize that articulation, although it may ultimately result in formal agreements about courses and alignment of standards, begins with the collaborative efforts of individuals that result in increased knowledge and trust.

This volume is also a call for action on the part of ESL professionals. We must continue to work to develop models for articulation in our own communities, and at the same time continue to demand that articulation be expanded from the local to the regional and statewide levels. We must take this message to administrators and others who can put it into action. We must enlist the support of our professional organizations, especially CATESOL, which itself speaks for all segments of ESL education in California, to advocate for a recognition that articulation is central to our task and essential for our students.

We must not let this volume sit on our shelves. It is our responsibility to get it into the hands of our colleagues, our administrators, and our policymakers so that articulation can move beyond the mechanical process of certifying course equivalency and become a meaningful process of communication and collaboration that will result in real bridges among the various levels of ESL education in the state of California. ■

## Endnotes

1. ICAS represents the three segments of higher education: the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California.

2. Copies of the TESOL ESL Standards document may be obtained by contacting Cynthia Daniels at the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), 118 22nd Street, NW, Washington, DC 10037. The cost is $10, prepaid by check, money order, or purchase order.

3. Copies of the "Canadian Language Benchmarks: ESL Benchmarks for Adults" and "ESL Benchmarks for Literacy Learners" may be obtained by writing or faxing: Information Centre, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Journal Tower South, 19th Floor, 365 Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa, ON, Canada K1A 1L1. Fax: (613) 954-2221.

4. Copies of *Standards in English and Mathematics for California High School Graduates* may be obtained by writing or faxing: Intersegmental Coordinating Committee (ICC), 560 J Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. Fax (916) 327-9172.

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The CATESOL Journal

GARI BROWNING
*Orange Coast College*

# Challenges Facing California ESL Students and Teachers

The missions of each segment in the California educational system—elementary school, high school, adult education, community college, CSU, and UC—are distinct. Elementary and high schools provide open access. That is, they must serve all children. Adult education is likewise committed to providing education for all interested individuals over the age of 18. Community colleges serve high school graduates and anyone over 18 who can demonstrate an ability to benefit from its services. Only at the CSU and UC are admissions requirements an issue, with the CSU accepting the top one third of high school graduates and the UC accepting the top 12% (Commission for the Review of the Master Plan, 1987).

As educators responsible for the crucial language instruction of second language students at all levels, ESL professionals are grappling with the multidimensional nature of the task: The population needing English is extremely large and heterogeneous; learning a second language is a process unlike any other; and there are different educational realities in each segment. The complexity of the task, however, is seldom well understood by those who are only indirectly involved in serving this population, and many times, those individuals are charged with making pivotal decisions affecting second language learners. ESL teachers have a clear picture of the second language issues and the circumstances of their students. However, they may not have an easy means by which to share that understanding with others who need the information to serve L2 students appropriately. For instance, those in contact with second language students need to know that these students cannot be viewed as a single group, that ESL classes are unlike courses designed to improve the English skills of native speakers, and that it takes ten years or more of high quality ESL instruction for second language learners to acquire a level of academic English that will enable them

to compete with native English speakers (Collier, 1989). Enabling ESL professionals to represent and address these issues effectively is the purpose of this article.

## Challenges Facing L2 Students

California's second language population is far larger than that of any other state, with 42% of the nation's second language students in its schools. Over a third of California's population speak a language other than English at home. In 1992, 76% of the second language population was Spanish-speaking, and about 16% spoke an Asian language. These two groups also account for three quarters of the state's population growth, and between the years 2005 and 2010, it is predicted that Latinos and Asians will outnumber Anglos in California for the first time (Walters, 1986).

To those observing the situation from a distance, the fact that second language students have cultures and languages different from traditional Americans makes them appear to fit into a single category. However, ESL teachers can testify that it is simplistic to refer to the second language population as a single group. It is not much more informative to divide that group into Spanish-speaking students and those who speak an Asian language. The diversity of the population is its only constant. California's students speak over 26 different languages at home (Department of Commerce, Economics, and Statistics Aministration, Bureau of the Census, 1990). Even within language groups, there are varieties of cultures and ethnicities. Students also come from the widest possible range of educational levels, from preliterate to postdoctoral, and they have a large assortment of educational goals. These learners also arrive in the U.S. through several means. Some emigrate through legal channels, some illegal. Some come as refugees. Others come for a short stay, just to study. And many have grown up here or were even born in this country. These diverse cultures, experiences, languages, and attitudes are manifested in a wide array of responses to the United States, and the diversity of their needs complicates their acquisition of English (see Murray, this volume).

Second language students bring with them distinct cultures and customs. For instance, following the tradition of a close extended family, these students often have greater family responsibilities than native English speakers do. At the other extreme, students on their own in the U.S. may be affected by the absence of the strong family support system to which they are accustomed. For some, responsibilities for spouses, parents, or younger siblings may take time away from studies. In some cultures, a strong work ethic combined with the custom of all contributing to the family income may discourage children from attending school in favor of starting work at

a young age. Yet also among the second language population are those students from cultures that make education a top priority.

In many instances, financial demands force immigrant students to work more than native students do. These demands also encourage students to rush to complete their education and to maximize their educational dollar by enrolling in a large, sometimes overwhelming, number of courses. These students also often skip ESL courses in their hurry to complete their education, a practice that often backfires by costing them success in future courses or more time to back up and take the language courses they needed initially. Second language students often also sacrifice involvement in extracurricular activities and thus forfeit opportunities to interact with native speakers of English.

Because most second language learners have emigrated from their homeland, they have often had traumatic experiences associated with coming to this country. Some are political refugees or have come to the U.S. from war-torn nations. They may have endured horrors and lost everything including their families. Regardless of their background, they must make their way in a society that may be very different from what they are used to. Once here, some groups must cope in a postindustrial, information-age Western country for the first time. Additionally, they are often confronted with racism, anti-immigrant sentiment, and discrimination against anyone who does not have nativelike English. All of these issues potentially impede the willingness of newly arrived second language learners to seek language instruction.

In an attempt to feel comfortable in an otherwise unwelcoming new society, second language learners often seek companionship in an ethnic community with others from their home country. These communities provide comfort with their familiar sights, food, and values and offer genuine opportunities for cognitive development through cultural interaction and intellectual growth in the first language (L1). However, life in such communities offers few opportunities to interact with English speakers, making school the place where most such interaction occurs. In school districts where single first language populations predominate, chances to interact in English or to acculturate are restricted to the classroom (see Scarcella, this volume).

Second language students, especially the younger ones, often wish to adopt American ways, particularly the ways of American youth. This acculturation process may create conflict between the traditional values and customs of parents and the new values and customs immigrant youth emulate. The conflict is further complicated by parents' desire for their children to succeed in the new culture. Successful acquisition of the second language

culture and the English language takes time and is seldom achieved without a struggle. The desire to fit in with their native English-speaking (NS) peers may ironically slow their English development by dissuading students from enrolling in ESL courses. Although these students are very different from each other their identity as "foreigners" and need for English language skills provide common ground.

**Learning English as a Second Language**

As ESL professionals, we know that the ability to acquire language is inherent in human beings. In fact, every normal person acquires a highly complex linguistic system in his or her native language by the age of five. The remaining more subtle structures are acquired from ages six to 12 (Collier, 1995). The vocabulary needed to function in most survival situations is learned very early in life along with the function words and word forms that make the language understandable (Crystal, 1987). The basic sound system of the language, including most stress and intonation patterns, is also complete by an early age except for the sounds that are the most difficult to articulate (e.g., the *th* in English) (Dale, 1988). Features found almost exclusively in the written form of the language are typically learned at school.

When learners acquire a second language, they bring the same linguistic ability to the task, and the process is similar. They take in language they understand and use it to communicate. In this communication process, second language learners begin to decipher the structure of the language they are trying to learn. As more communication takes place, they refine their concept of the structure and generate rules that are applied in new communication situations. Because each learner's grasp of the structures in the second language is incomplete, gaps often are filled in by hypotheses based on the learner's native language. The result of this process is a representation of the target language that contains what may be perceived as errors, but which ESL professionals view as a developing linguistic system (called an *interlanguage*) that rests somewhere on a continuum between the speaker's first language and the target language (Selinker, 1972).

Learners acquire English at different rates depending upon linguistic, cognitive, and academic factors such as first language background, motivation, age, and quality of schooling. Students' linguistic systems develop unevenly. The development depends on the quality of exposure to the second language the learner receives in addition to the same factors that affect the general rate of acquisition (Collier, 1995). Therefore, students who have lived in the U.S. for a long time may have sophisticated listening and speaking skills, but their reading and writing skills may be much less devel-

oped. Students who have studied written English in other countries but may not have had the opportunity to hear the language spoken by native speakers may have the opposite pattern of skill development. Additionally, a student may demonstrate different proficiency levels in a given skill depending upon the task required. For example, a student may demonstrate advanced proficiency on a narrative writing assignment but only intermediate proficiency on an analytical one .

How close to a complete and accurate representation of the target language learners ultimately come is dependent on a host of factors. It typically requires five to seven years to reach parity with high school native English speakers if factors align to work in the learner's favor (Collier, 1989). If learners start the language acquisition process early in secondary school or sooner, if the language program provides feedback that expedites understanding of the target language structure, if there is sufficient opportunity for genuine interaction in the target language within a context that promotes language learning, the five-to-seven year acquisition period applies (Collier, 1989). The more education learners have in their first language, the closer they will be to achieving this goal within five years. Students with no schooling in their first language take an average of seven to ten years and sometimes longer to reach average native speaker norms (Collier, 1989). Other factors such as the learner's personality, learning style, first language, motivation, and attitude towards the new language and culture also either positively or negatively affect the length of time it takes to learn the second language.

For second language learners aspiring to a higher education, their goal is to attain a level of proficiency in English that will enable them to compete academically with native speakers. Acquiring this level and type of language is far more demanding than learning the language for conversational purposes and takes far longer (Cummins, 1983). The task is also more complicated because the learner is engaged in learning the academic subject matter and the language simultaneously. Because learners must start with language they can understand, they are at a further disadvantage in mastering the target language if the English they hear and read is at an incomprehensible level.

The most daunting task for schools serving this population is accommodating the length of time it takes students to acquire a second language. Very few educators and even fewer noneducators have a realistic appreciation for this time factor. Constant pressure from administrators, parents, and even the students themselves to mainstream learners quickly often undermines teacher efforts to create effective second language programs. Some productive teaching techniques have been developed to facilitate the

second language acquisition process and at the same time help students keep pace academically with their native speaker counterparts—for example, specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE) (see Fields & Fields, this volume). But even these efforts are often dismissed as restricting access to college prep courses or as lower level and thus unequal tracks for second language students.

ESL programs are sometimes criticized by individuals who themselves learned English as a second language very successfully in the California school system. However, these individuals fail to realize that their language environment was not what it is today: They made up a tiny minority of second language students at the time and were thus afforded constant opportunity for interaction and feedback in English.[1] In addition, other educational and motivational advantages they may have had are seldom taken into account by these critics.

## Challenges Facing California Educators

Within the K–12 system, access to core curriculum is a concern for second language students. Students arrive in the U.S. at all ages and stages of English language acquisition. They may enter a U.S. high school in the 10th grade, for instance, and have only three years to learn whatever English they can before graduation time. The program may be designed to last for seven years, but students are often not around for the first four years of it. As a result students do not benefit from the program as it was designed. And yet the measure of success of a high school is its graduation rate for all students, not just those who have had the benefit of its full program. The expectation is that all students will graduate. The additional expectation is that all students will be able to take regular, college-preparatory coursework. For high schools in areas where the number of immigrant students is high, the challenge to provide access to the core curriculum for all students is formidable.

In many districts, students who arrive too late to graduate from regular high school are sent to adult education programs, most often administered within the same high school district. The goal of these programs is to help these students acquire enough English and basic skills to be able to receive a high school diploma and to get jobs. Students are offered vocational training and an opportunity to transition to higher education. Adult education ESL programs also serve the enormous population of newly arrived adult immigrants. Often these students are not literate in their first language, so their language acquisition process is combined with the acquisition of basic reading and writing skills. To these students adult education also provides life skills education.

Adult education programs are typically taxed with large class sizes, open-entry/open-exit policies, less than ideal facilities, and a disproportionate number of part-time teachers. Although some of these features, like the open-entry/open-exit policy, are in place to improve student access to programs, they also create problems. For instance, the open-entry/open-exit practice limits continuity and progression within the curriculum. Similarly, offering classes at sites in the community is convenient for students but does not encourage them to interact with students and faculty in regular college programs or to feel comfortable on a college campus (see Lieu; Manson; and Seymour, Scholnick, & Gibson, this volume). The main limitation for adult education programs, however, is the number of seats they can provide. Adult education ESL programs are extremely impacted, and funding for increased offerings is subject to the political climate surrounding this student population.

The primary mission of community colleges is to provide the first two years of general education for students to transfer to four-year institutions. Additionally this segment offers vocational programs and ESL and basic skills education to prepare students for college-level work. Although the mission and main service population for community colleges and adult education programs are different, the demand for ESL classes in both segments is enormous and growing. This demand has left the community colleges in many areas throughout the state unable to offer a sufficient number of ESL sections to prepare entering L2 students for other college and vocational courses.

The California State University and the University of California systems offer baccalaureate and graduate degrees. Given the length of time it takes to acquire academic English, second language students transferring from community colleges are typically still in need of ESL instruction in order to succeed in their courses and to complete their degrees. Although ESL instruction is offered at many of these institutions, not all campuses offer appropriate ESL instruction to students who transfer from community college.

Each segment has to contend with a set of unrealistic expectations. K–12 is expected to teach L2 students sufficient English to be ready for college, regardless of the circumstances students bring or the time they spend in the segment. Adult education programs are expected to provide completely open access to all adult students yet still offer high quality learning opportunities. Community colleges are likewise expected to accept all students, even those with no English language skills, on the one hand, and to prepare students to meet upper division writing demands on the other—all without creating a long ladder of courses. In spite of the sharp increase in L2 learners in the state population and the dilemmas facing feeder insti-

tutions, CSUs and UCs expect their students to have college-level writing proficiency when they arrive, and as a result of this expectation resist offering students the support they require (see Celce-Murcia & Schwabe and Murray, this volume).

Compounding the unreasonable demands placed on each segment, no vehicle for communication among the segments has been created. The dilemma of L2 students transitioning between segments, therefore, has yet to be meaningfully addressed. Because programs have been designed independently on each campus with little consideration of how the segments feed into one another, students face the same scenario at each segment: Their language abilities are assessed anew, and they are typically placed wherever they fit in that program without reference to their previous language-learning history. Difficulty achieving articulation for ESL offerings means students' previous coursework is seldom evaluated or considered from segment to segment. It is thus not surprising that students feel they are forced to start over with their ESL classes at each educational juncture (see Ediger, and Lane, Brinton, & Erickson, this volume).

**Identification of L2 Learners and Assessing Language Needs**

Identification and placement of L2 learners in language courses varies from segment to segment and from campus to campus. The inconsistency of practices causes part of the difficulty in providing appropriate language instruction across segments to those who need it.

California elementary and secondary schools identify students as potentially in need of second language instruction through a home language survey completed by parents. The survey asks four questions designed to determine if each student is a second language learner. Students so identified are later given a language assessment in both their native language and in English (see Sasser; Fields & Dunlap, this volume).

Students entering a school district for the first time have their listening and speaking skills evaluated using one of four state-approved instruments designed to elicit a brief language sample. Reading and writing are evaluated by a local instrument if students are old enough to be expected to have those skills. On the basis of their listening and speaking skills, students are judged as fully English proficient (FEP), or limited English proficient (LEP). This determination has enormous implications for students' future opportunities for language instruction. Those judged as FEP are not eligible for bilingual instruction, ESL instruction, or other language acquisition support for the length of time they remain students in that district. If, for example, on the basis of understanding and responding to a few spoken lines of English, a student is evaluated as FEP in kindergarten and later has

second language problems in writing, the only avenue of assistance available is remedial instruction designed for native English speakers.

Community colleges must assess students' language skills upon entry using a combination of state-approved instruments and other types of measures. Students may be advised or placed in ESL courses according to the assessment results. Unlike the K–12 system of identifying potential L2 students for later language assessment and the practice by some CSU and UC campuses of basing placement on second language features found in a writing sample, the community college system allows students to choose to participate in either the assessment process designed for native speakers or the one designed for second language learners. Since assessment instruments designed and normed on native English speakers do not address issues of language structure (the prevailing instructional issue for L2 learners of academic English), the instruments fail to place students accurately. Often second language students who have elected to participate in the native speaker assessment process find themselves in developmental (formerly called *remedial*) English courses, where none of their second language features are addressed. After wasting a semester or more, they may be advised to take ESL.

At CSUs and UCs where ESL programs exist, efforts to identify and place L2 students differ widely. Although all CSUs evaluate entering freshmen on the English Placement Test (EPT), a test designed to measure native English skills, specific evaluation of L2 students is not required systemwide. Moreover, L2 students transferring from community colleges are usually exempt from any assessment process. These transfer students very often have difficulty passing the Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR), a graduation requirement at all CSUs.[2] They may also have trouble with their other courses and may fail to graduate from the CSU campuses.

At the UC, practices differ from campus to campus as to whether and how students are identified as ESL. Along with other entering freshmen, freshmen ESL students take the UC systemwide Subject A Examination. When students are identified by this exam as potentially in need of ESL instruction, the individual campuses to which they have been accepted make decisions about their placement. On most campuses, they are screened further and placed in ESL courses if deemed necessary. On other campuses, students are immediately mainstreamed whether or not they have been identified by the UC systemwide exam as being potentially in need of ESL instruction. Transfer students entering the UC have already satisfied their freshman composition requirement. With the exception of one campus (UCLA), campuses do not identify transfer students as ESL or hold them to a requirement.

Identification and assessment of second language students in all segments is uneven and inconsistent (see Ching, Ford, & McKee; Fields & Dunlap; Sasser, this volume). In K–12, the home language survey works well to identify students who are likely to benefit from L2 instruction. However, basing eligibility for L2 support on only listening and speaking assessment at the early ages combined with locally devised evaluation of reading and writing later on has left some students without the second language programs they need to successfully acquire academic English. In community colleges, the recent requirement that all tests used must be approved as a valid match for the program's curriculum and students is a step forward. Nevertheless, permitting students to follow an assessment process designed for native speakers has done a grave disservice to L2 students who believe they can succeed in college without gaining the level of second language skill required for college-level coursework. Finally, the four-year universities have, in most cases, not recognized the need to identify and assess L2 transfer students and have failed to provide the consistent ESL support these students need to succeed on the GWAR, in the case of CSU, or in their other college courses.

**Curricular Issues**

ESL curriculum development in high schools, as with all high school subjects, is tied to a state framework that defines what will be taught. Yet, there is no framework for high school ESL separate from the one designed for native English students. However, for adult education a set of standards which assure consistency in content and level for adult ESL programs has been developed (California Department of Education, 1992).

Community colleges are free to set their curricula independently. Each college's faculty is charged with approving courses offered in accordance with a state curriculum model. In addition, courses are separately articulated for transfer purposes with each CSU and UC campus, and sets of transfer courses have been agreed upon by the four-year institutions. The state curriculum model and transfer agreements provide some common standards or general education courses across the community college system (see Garlow, this volume).

Typically, intersegmental articulation agreements do not govern ESL course work. Thus, students often do not receive credit for ESL courses when they transfer to another campus within a given segment or when they move from segment to segment. As a result, they may be retested for their English language skills when they enter the new institution.

Although over half of the community colleges have at least one ESL course designed to transfer to four-year universities, the overriding consid-

eration in the development of community college ESL curricula is not articulation with universities but their fit with the needs of the college's local population. Designing ESL programs to fit local populations has resulted in a range of offerings—from the most beginning types of language instruction including preliteracy training to ESL courses comparable to freshman composition courses. Offerings also vary in terms of their focus on listening and speaking skills versus reading and writing and regarding how closely they are tied to vocational programs. The result is a wide range of levels and emphases, with little or no articulation of ESL courses between colleges, even those within a single district.

In several of the state's largest districts, the community college district performs the function of adult education described above. These college districts have entered into agreements with their K–12 districts to provide adult education for their communities. Where such programs exist in the community colleges, they usually do not bear college credit, but are offered alongside a college credit ESL program (see Seymour et al, this volume).

Four-year institutions have language programs designed to help students succeed in upper division courses. Since these courses typically require students to write proficiently, university ESL programs focus largely on writing skills. The purpose of university ESL courses is typically far narrower than those offered in any other segment because their purpose is so tightly defined. However, partly because feeder high school and community college ESL programs serve a number of purposes, only one of which is developing students' college-level writing skills, university faculty are frustrated by the lack of grammatical sophistication L2 students bring to their segment.

Because ESL programs are designed to match the needs of the local student population and the framework of each segment, they do not fit together from segment to segment. Nevertheless, ESL students must meet the same requirements for graduation, entry, or transfer as all other students in the state of California. Combined, these two factors mean that to progress from one segment to the next, ESL students require a longer time since they must acquire academic English and must complete ESL courses in addition to other courses specified.

### Qualified ESL Faculty

ESL professionals recognize that in order to best serve the needs of L2 learners, they must be appropriately educated in the discipline of teaching ESL (TESL). Minimum qualifications for hiring ESL faculty have recently been established in most segments, ensuring that ESL teachers are knowl-

edgeable in the areas of linguistics, second language acquisition, TESL methodologies, and cross-cultural issues. Implementation of minimum qualifications, however, remains somewhat problematic at all levels.

At the high school level, in addition to having a secondary teaching credential, ESL teachers must have a language development specialist certificate (LDS), a bilingual/bicultural certificate of competence (BCC), a cross-cultural, language, and academic development certificate (CLAD), a bilingual CLAD (BCLAD), or an ESL supplemental certificate. However, teachers may sometimes sign a teacher-in-training document while completing a certificate, or they may obtain an emergency waiver if they have a baccalaureate degree and have passed the California Basic Education Skills Test (CBEST), permitting them to teach while they are enrolled in a teacher credentialing program.

In the high school segment, there remains a scarcity of teachers who hold the appropriate credentials to teach ESL or sheltered (SDAIE) classes. As a result, many teachers are currently employed through the emergency credential process. These teachers, some of whom hold only BA degrees, are allowed to teach through the waiver process and typically have two years to complete the requirements for the secondary credential. Others sign a teacher-in-training document, agreeing to obtain the appropriate certificate (e.g., LDS) within a determined time period, typically two to three years.

Qualifications vary somewhat in the higher education segments, though an MA in TESL generally serves as a minimum qualification. In 1987, the California community college credential was replaced by the requirement that all instructors hold a master's degree in their teaching discipline. ESL instructors at the community college must hold an MA in TESL, or an MA in a related field and a TESL certificate. This requirement may also be met through a locally determined equivalency process.

There are no uniform requirements for teaching ESL at the CSU or UC. Generally, CSUs require a PhD degree in linguistics, TESL, or a closely related field to teach full time. Such full-time faculty typically teach in linguistics or TESL master's programs but may also teach some ESL classes. Part-time faculty usually have a master's degree in TESL, or a MA in English or a closely related field with a certificate in TESL. Both full-time and part-time faculty with no special qualifications may be assigned to ESL classes. Qualifications are established at the department level. Full-time and part-time UC faculty teaching matriculated students may be professors or lecturers. Professors (tenure-track, visiting, and temporary) must hold PhD degrees. Lecturers have either master's or doctoral degrees in TESL, applied linguistics, or a related field. These faculty may also teach in MATESL or PhD programs.

**Overuse of Part-Time Instructors**

In addition to teaching qualifications, another hiring issue affecting the quality of ESL instruction in higher education is the tendency of colleges and universities to rely heavily on part-time instructors and teaching assistants. In areas of rapid growth like ESL, part-time faculty are typically hired to fill the immediate need. They are less expensive than full-time faculty, and they do not acquire tenure. However, in times of budget cuts, the lack of institutional commitment to part-time faculty makes these ESL part-time faculty the first to be eliminated. The result is that programs of recent growth and those in the highest demand (i.e., usually those intended for ESL students) tend to be reduced before older, more established programs, despite the often greater demand for more ESL offerings.

Because full-time instructors are typically fully integrated staff members and do not suffer the marginalization part-time faculty often encounter, they are essential in assuring that institutions meet the L2 learners' needs. A strong core of full-time faculty plays a central role in developing programs that match the needs of second language learners and acts as advocates for them on the campus and in the community. ESL faculty also serve as sources of information about L2 learners and ESL course offerings to administration, staff, faculty from other disciplines, and the rest of the student population. They ensure that ESL courses prepare students for transition to mainstream English courses, provide academic support for other coursework, and foster the learning strategies ESL students will need to be successful. ESL faculty communicate the L2 learners' unique needs to the counseling staff and are themselves active advisors of L2 learners. ESL faculty also offer teachers in other disciplines help in adapting their instruction to the needs of L2 learners without watering down their standards or course content.

**Faculty Development and Collaboration**

K–12 teachers who teach subjects other than ESL, like their ESL counterparts, must complete a course on multiculturalism in order to qualify for a credential. In addition, any teachers assigned to a content course that is designated bilingual must have a BCC or a BCLAD credential; teachers assigned to a class designated as sheltered/SDAIE must have an LDS, BCC, CLAD, or BCLAD.

At other education levels, there are no special requirements for non-ESL faculty who have L2 learners in their classes. However, these faculty have been encouraged to learn how to better meet L2 learners' needs and more effectively communicate course content. In part, this effort has come

about at the community colleges through the requirement that the success of under-represented students be evaluated. This need for faculty awareness of L2 students' learning needs and characteristics is equally important at the CSU and UC.

As important as ESL faculty are in serving ESL students, they cannot begin to do the job by themselves. In most programs, ESL students spend only a small part of their school day with ESL teachers, if they spend any time at all. Most of their time is spent with teachers in other disciplines. Therefore, developing academic language skills for ESL students must be viewed as the task of teachers in all disciplines and at all levels, since L2 learners remain engaged in the process of language development throughout their academic lives.

In order to serve L2 learners, content-area faculty need information about who second language students are, including the amount and kind of education they received in their home countries, their length of residence in the U.S., their educational experiences in the U.S., and the results of assessment. They also need background in second language acquisition and multicultural communication. Most importantly, they need help in designing instruction that will be accessible to the L2 learners in their classes and that will contribute to these students' language development and add to their repertoire of learning strategies. Teachers need to learn interactive teaching techniques that will make the second language students in their classes active users of English. Finally, they need to find ways to assess fairly the learning of second language students in their classes. This understanding of L2 learners is currently being addressed at the high school level by the qualification requirements for content teachers. For content teachers in the higher education segments, these objectives can best be accomplished through both formal faculty development and an ongoing informal dialogue among ESL faculty and faculty in other disciplines.

**ESL Faculty's Key Roles**

ESL faculty can be instrumental in educating content-area faculty to serve L2 learners in their classes. For example, one promising model offers adjunct classes to accompany content courses, thus giving L2 learners an opportunity to develop the study strategies they need to be successful in a content area course. In such a program, ESL faculty work closely with faculty teaching courses ranging from computer science to psychology to ensure that the ESL courses support the content courses. In the process, the content faculty learn new and more effective ways of reaching the L2 learners in their classes. The key to the success of these programs is the close cooperation between ESL core faculty and the faculty teaching the

content courses. When language development becomes a team effort rather than the sole responsibility of the ESL faculty, students and faculty both benefit.

### Increasing Internal Articulation

To ensure that students make reasonable progress in their language learning process, programs must offer an internally articulated sequence. The skills taught in the first level must be adequately mastered before the student progresses to the second level. Curricula need to reflect this progression; hence, the exit skills of level one must match the entrance skills of level two, and so forth. Additionally, expectations of the extent to which these skills must be mastered to ensure success in the next level need to be clearly spelled out to the students, ideally before they enter the course. This internal articulation is vital to program integrity. Course standards developed around internal level definitions form the basis for later intersegmental communication about student skill level and articulation of courses. One way to carry the message about L2 students to those outside the ESL field is to identify some key areas that every educator should know. Appendix A articulates some of the most important points concisely.

## Addressing The L2 Challenge: Agreeing Upon Standards

ESL faculty readily agree on the long-standing need to describe the continuum of ESL proficiency levels, that is, to develop a common vocabulary that characterizes the stages of English second language acquisition. In 1985, the California Community Colleges Board of Governors ESL Task Force recommended defining ESL levels state wide. More recently, Amnesty legislation, California Community College Matriculation regulations, the Immigrant Education and Workforce Preparation Act, and the Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates (ICAS) discussions have all highlighted the specific need for such second language descriptors. One response came from community college ESL professionals who produced *Matriculating the ESL Student* (ESL Assessment Group, 1992) and the *Community College ESL Proficiency Level Descriptors* (ESL Assessment Group, 1993).[1] The community college descriptors served as models for a set of intersegmental descriptors contained in *California Pathways: The Second Language Student in Public High Schools, Colleges, and Universities* (ESL Intersegmental Project, 1996). *California Pathways* was written to describe the richly diverse and often difficult routes second language students must travel to reach their educational goals within California's K–12, community college, and four-year university systems.

The intersegmental descriptors (ESL Intersegmental Project, 1996)

give ESL specialists and others who are in contact with this population a way to connect the language education paths of a significant portion of California's students. Although the descriptors have yet to be anchored to language samples or compared to existing assessment instruments, they serve as a starting point—the first step in a process to develop meaningful intersegmental communication, appropriate measures of language proficiency, and effective curricula to improve articulation between courses, campuses, and segments.

These descriptors characterize the second language continuum in the four skill areas: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They have application both within and across the segments of California education from high schools through the California Community College, California State University, and University of California systems. The descriptors give those who work with second language (L2) learners a common language to approach the following:

- discussing the continuum of L2 proficiency levels
- developing or revising ESL curricula
- evaluating tests
- interpreting courses within and across segments.

The descriptors were developed by looking at a variety of existing scales, ultimately including features that seemed, in the opinion of project members, to describe the academic English language proficiency of students within all four segments. They function in these ways:

- describing learners' observable language performance
- representing at a given level in a particular skill area a composite view of a student's proficiency, with the caveat that every trait listed may not match a student's proficiency
- identifying the beginning point for a level with the assumption that the skills below it have been acquired.

The following issues are outside the scope of the descriptors. They do not:

- assume literacy in a student's first language (L1). Literacy in the L1 is an important factor affecting acquisition of reading and writing skills in English, but the degree of L1 literacy does not need to be measured to apply these descriptors
- correspond to program levels—a single course may have to serve students at several levels in some programs
- attempt to define whether a course merits credit or not

• replace institutional grading scales or rubrics.

Some underlying assumptions about L2 learners should inform those who use the descriptors:

1. Students in a particular program may reflect only a portion of the range.

2. The time it takes a student to move from level to level may vary. Acquisition of academic English can be an especially lengthy process. Although students may be able to carry on everyday, informal communication much earlier, they may require ten years or longer to be able to function in an academic setting. Progress tends to be much faster at the lower levels.

3. Students acquire English at different rates. Acquisition rate is influenced by various factors including first language background, motivation, age, and quality of schooling.

4. A student may have uneven language skills. For example, a student may demonstrate advanced speaking skills but only intermediate writing skills.

5. A student may demonstrate different proficiency levels in a given skill depending upon the task required. For example, a student may demonstrate advanced proficiency on a narrative writing assignment but only intermediate proficiency on an analytical writing assignment.

6. Even at the advanced and superior levels, L2 users of English may retain some "accent" both in speaking and writing that distinguishes them from educated native speakers.

## Conclusion

Just as the cognitive demands on students increase as they move from high school to community college to university, so too do the linguistic demands. For example, L2 skills that are adequate to meet high school needs may be less than adequate to meet community college needs. Similarly, students possessing adequate linguistic skills to cope at the community college may experience difficulty in upper division university courses. It is therefore no surprise that the L2 level required to mainstream students in English courses designated for native English speakers increases as students move through the segments (Collier, 1995).

The existing articulation agreements between the high schools and the CSU or UC systems require that ESL students complete four years of high school English instruction before qualifying to apply for college or university admission. Since many ESL courses do not fulfill CSU or UC entrance requirements, high school ESL students who wish to pursue higher education are frequently mainstreamed into regular English classes before they are ready as part of an attempt to qualify them for college admission. Many

students who follow this path later find themselves underprepared for coping with the language demands of the community college or university. As a result, they are often required to take ESL courses after they have entered a college or university, despite having completed ESL at the secondary level. The use of the Second Language Proficiency Descriptors to closely articulate ESL courses and skill levels among high schools, community colleges, and universities will address this issue.

Strengthening communication among the segments will lead to clearer articulation of ESL courses at each juncture. To provide a concrete basis for that communication, the Second Language Proficiency Descriptors should be promptly tied to language samples and assessment instruments in each segment. The development of critically needed ESL assessment instruments, especially those designed to be used intersegmentally, must also begin as soon as possible.

In addition, to further aid the process of intersegmental articulation, a segment by segment database on second language learners is needed. Although some student information is systematically collected by the K–12 and community college segments, it is typically extracted by ethnicity rather than by first language. Information on course enrollment is similarly difficult to interpret. However, in order to understand the dimensions and needs of this population within and across segments, carefully designed data collection by all segments is required. ■

**Endnotes**

1. With 90% to 100% of some of today's high school student populations consisting of second language students, the situation has changed. Students in such situations no longer interact with native speakers on school grounds, in their communities, or often even at work.

2. Some university campuses report a 70% to 80% failure rate on the GWAR and similar tests for L2 transfer students compared to a 25% to 40% failure rate for native English transfers. *(Report on the Test to Fulfill the Upper Division English Composition Requirement,* UC Davis, 1992).

3. Descriptors are available from CATESOL, 1146 N. Central Avenue, #195, Glendale, CA 91202.

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## Appendix A

### What Every California Educator Should Know About L2 Learners

Because the second language student population in California schools is increasing, every educator who comes in contact with these students must have a basic understanding of their needs in order to assure they are appropriately educated.

**Not all L2 learners have the same educational needs.**

Because second language students share the need to learn English, they are often seen as forming a homogeneous educational group. They are, however, not at all homogeneous. In fact, the interplay of variables characterizing L2 learners makes meeting the population's educational needs exceptionally challenging. It is therefore important that all segments of education give particular attention to an individual L2 learner's situation when evaluating his or her need for services.

**Educationally useful distinctions among language learners can be made.**

There are three groups of language learners that can make understanding students' needs easier. The term *native speakers of English* refers to students whose first language, the language acquired at home, was English. The term *L2 learners* (second language learners) refers to all students whose home language during early childhood was other than English. A subgroup of L2 learners, *ESL students,* are those who have need for ESL programs or classes designed to help them acquire the English language. It is important to understand the dynamics of these three groups because their language education needs are not the same. Such definitions should be integral to any assessment and advising process affecting L2 learners because they will help to distinguish, for example, the L2 learner from most basic skills students whose first language is English.

**Learning a second language is a unique process.**

Learners acquire English by developing their understanding of the linguistic system through communication. They gradually refine their concept of the system, and during that process fill gaps in their concept with hypotheses based on the their native language. The result of this process is a representation of the target language that contains what others may perceive as error, but in reality it is a developing linguistic system called an interlanguage that rests somewhere on a continuum between the speaker's first language and the target language. Educationally sound feedback leads learners to revise these hypotheses; over a long period of time these revisions help them approach mastery of the language. Unfortunately, if L2 learners function for long in a language without getting adequate feedback, they may not fully develop their control of the language. In fact, their language development may stop before they have acquired all the features of language.

**Learning language is unlike learning most subjects where a body of information can be imparted and its comprehension easily measured.**

Instead, students' success in acquiring English is measured by asking them to use the language in an infinite number of situations. Children enter school already able to do this in their first language, so there is no need to measure it in this way. The closest subject to ESL is foreign language education, but the level of application needed for ESL students to live and work using English, and to compete academically, far exceeds the need for foreign language skill in this country.

**Measuring skill level in a second language is not the same as measuring native language skill.**

Once L2 students are correctly identified, accurate assessment and subsequent placement into appropriate language courses are essential for L2 learners to succeed, to be retained, and to progress through the educational system in California. It is ineffective to use objectively scored instruments designed to assess the English of native speakers for assessing the English level of second language learners. Four-year institutions often blend the identification and assessment processes by distinguishing students in need of ESL courses when evaluating their writing.

**The linguistic demands of courses increase as the student moves up through the segments.**

Just as the cognitive demands on students increase as they move from high school to community college to university, so do the linguistic demands. For example, L2 skills that are adequate to meet high school needs may be less than adequate to meet community college needs. Similarly, students possessing adequate linguistic skills to cope at the community college may experience difficulty in upper division university courses. It is therefore no surprise that the L2 level required to mainstream students into English courses designated for native English speakers increases as students move through the segments.

**It can easily take ten years to learn a second language well enough to succeed academically.**

Perhaps the most crucial issue in designing effective ESL programs is understanding the length of time it takes to acquire proficiency in a second language and how proficiency is defined. Recent research shows that on average it takes five to seven years for young students to reach the norm on nationally standardized achievement tests. Education in the first language reduces the amount of time required and improves ultimate second language proficiency. So much time is required for fully acquiring a second language, in fact, that university level L2 learners who have been studying English in the United States for ten years sometimes still need ESL instruction. Understanding the length of time required to attain proficiency in a second language is important for all educational professionals because of a tendency within the educational system itself to rush L2 learners through a school's language continuum.

Acquiring academic English requires a great deal more time and study than learning to speak English, and is a far more challenging task. L2 learners are often at a disadvantage because they are faced with the task of acquiring and using academic English at the same time they are trying to learn other course subjects. Also because it takes so long to learn academic English, conversational fluency in English often masks a lack of competency in reading and writing English. L2 learners typically acquire listening and speaking skills prior to learning to read and write. Their fluency in English and sometimes their familiarity with U.S. customs and culture often cause the listener to assume a higher level of language skill than the student possesses.

**To best assist L2 learners to reach their educational goals as quickly as possible, it is important to identify them right away.**

The accurate and early identification of L2 learners is of utmost importance because their identification determines which set of services, which set of assessment measures, and which types of courses, ESL or native-English, will best meet such learners' needs. Consistently considering a student's first language experience will prevent misidentification of L2 learners on the basis of factors unrelated to their language skills. For example, a student's previous enrollment in courses or programs intended for native English speakers is not a dependable indication of a student's familiarity with or abilities in English. Similarly, because some students do not understand the term "ESL" or are reluctant to self-identify as L2 learners, advisors and others consistently need to consider first language experience as a primary indication of whether or not such individuals may be correctly identified as students best aided by second language services and assessment.

*Source:* ESL Intersegmental Project. (1996). *California Pathways: The second language student in public high schools, colleges, and universities.* Sacramento: Intersegmental Council of Academic Senates in conjunction with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

## Appendix B

## SECOND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTORS

### LISTENING

NOVICE-LOW

- has little or no ability to understand spoken English
- sometimes recognizes isolated words and learned phrases

NOVICE-MID

- understands some words and common social phrases
- understands some short, previously learned words or phrases, particularly when the situation strongly supports understanding
- understands short phrases or sentences about topics that refer to basic personal information or the immediate physical setting
- can rarely keep pace with the ongoing message
- usually requires repetition or careful speech

NOVICE-HIGH

- understands words and phrases in familiar situations
- understands personal interactions when the situation is familiar and strongly supportive
- usually misunderstands the central message in extended speech
- can sometimes keep pace with the ongoing message
- often requires repetition or careful speech

INTERMEDIATE-LOW

- understands familiar information in interactions that fulfill immediate personal needs
- sometimes understands new information when the situation is strongly supportive
- often misunderstands when information is unfamiliar or when cultural knowledge is required
- can sometimes identify subjects and details when listening to extended speech, but often misunderstands the central message
- has uneven understanding of natural speech and often requires repetition or rephrasing

INTERMEDIATE-MID

- often understands new information in brief personal interactions
- has understanding that is uneven and generally affected by length, topic familiarity, and cultural knowledge
- can often identify subjects and details when listening to extended speech, but sometimes misunderstands the central message
- usually understands natural speech when the situation is familiar or fulfills immediate needs

INTERMEDIATE-HIGH

- often understands new information in sustained personal interactions
- sometimes understands speech on abstract or academic topics, especially if there is support
- has understanding that is often affected by length, topic familiarity, and cultural knowledge
- can usually identify subjects and details when listening to extended speech and rarely misunderstands the central message
- sometimes understands implications beyond the surface meaning

ADVANCED

- often understands the central idea of speech related to professional or academic topics
- often cannot sustain understanding of conceptually or linguistically complex speech
- has understanding that is sometimes affected by length, topic familiarity, and cultural knowledge
- often understands implications beyond the surface meaning

ADVANCED-HIGH

- usually understands the central idea and most details of speech related to professional and academic topics
- usually sustains understanding of conceptually or linguistically complex speech
- has understanding that is rarely affected by length, topic familiarity, and cultural knowledge
- usually understands implications beyond the surface meaning

SUPERIOR

- understands technical or professional presentations and discussions in a field of specialization
- sustains understanding of conceptually and linguistically complex speech
- usually understands rapid, accented, dialectal, or regional speech
- understands implications beyond the surface meaning
- recognizes but may not always understand idioms, colloquialisms, and language nuances

DISTINGUISHED

- understands highly technical or professional presentations and discussions in a field of specialization
- understands rapid, accented, dialectal, or regional speech
- understands idioms, colloquialisms, and language nuances
- has listening skills essentially indistinguishable from those of an educated native speaker of English

## SECOND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTORS

## SPEAKING

NOVICE-LOW

- can sometimes produce isolated words and a few frequently occurring phrases but may not use them accurately
- demonstrates little or no functional communicative ability
- is usually misunderstood even by attentive listeners

NOVICE-MID

- uses vocabulary and short learned phrases sufficient for meeting simple needs and for expressing basic courtesies
- frequently pauses and may repeat the listener's words
- speaks with some accuracy when relying on learned phrases
- speaks with limited accuracy when new vocabulary and structures are required
- is often misunderstood even by attentive listeners

NOVICE-HIGH

- uses concrete vocabulary that relates to familiar topics
- can ask and answer simple questions and initiate and respond to simple statements
- can participate in a brief face-to-face conversation on a familiar topic
- sometimes recombines learned material in original ways with limited grammatical accuracy

- often uses language that is not situationally or culturally appropriate
- is sometimes misunderstood even by attentive listeners

INTERMEDIATE-LOW

- uses basic concrete and abstract vocabulary
- uses a limited range of grammatical structures correctly
- can maintain a face-to-face conversation on a familiar topic
- occasionally expresses original ideas with limited grammatically accuracy
- sometimes uses language that is not situationally or culturally appropriate
- is occasionally misunderstood even by attentive listeners

INTERMEDIATE-MID

- can perform basic communication tasks in many social situations
- often demonstrates awareness of target culture by choosing language appropriate to context
- begins and participates in simple conversations on topics of interest
- can provide added detail or rephrase message to facilitate conversation
- over relies on familiar grammatical structures and vocabulary to communicate message
- has a basic functional vocabulary; attempts to use more academic vocabulary may result in inappropriate word choice and awkward phrasing
- can usually be understood by most attentive listeners

INTERMEDIATE-HIGH

- uses a variety of concrete and abstract vocabulary, sometimes inappropriately
- has control over many basic and complex grammatical structures
- can communicate in most social situations, though not always accurately
- can provide added detail or rephrase message to facilitate conversation
- usually uses language that is situationally and culturally appropriate
- can usually be understood by attentive listeners

ADVANCED

- uses a wide variety of concrete and abstract vocabulary
- often uses precise word choice to communicate shades of meaning
- has control over most basic and complex grammatical structures
- can communicate in many social, professional, and academic situations
- uses language that is situationally and culturally appropriate
- is usually easily understood

ADVANCED-HIGH

- uses a sophisticated range of vocabulary
- has control over almost all grammatical structures
- usually uses precise word choice to communicate shades of meaning
- can communicate in most social, professional, and academic situations
- communicates effectively in most social, professional, and academic situations
- is easily understood

SUPERIOR

- has control over virtually all grammatical structures
- can communicate in virtually all social, professional, and academic situations
- uses precise and sophisticated word choice to communicate shades of meaning
- is usually able to tailor language to a specific audience

DISTINGUISHED

- may be nearly or completely indistinguishable from an educated native speaker
- effectively tailors language to match the needs of a specific audience
- possesses nativelike linguistic and cultural knowledge

## SECOND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTORS

### READING

NOVICE-LOW

- is sometimes able to read isolated words and common phrases, especially when they are strongly supported by visual context

NOVICE-MID

- comprehends familiar words and/or phrases which may appear in lists, labels, signs, forms, and directions
- understands simple sentences which contain familiar words and phrases
- sometimes understands clearly related sentences when context, background knowledge, or visual information support meaning

NOVICE-HIGH

- usually reads slowly, word by word
- understands many common words and/or phrases
- sometimes understands new words and/or phrases when the context supports meaning
- sometimes understands common sentence connectors and transitional devices
- can sometimes locate facts in short, simple texts

- often understands clearly related sentences when context, background knowledge, or visual information support meaning

INTERMEDIATE-LOW

- reads word by word or in short phrases
- understands most common words and/or phrases
- can often locate facts in short, simple texts
- sometimes understands new information from texts with familiar language
- occasionally uses textual cues such as sentence connectors and transitional devices to comprehend the meaning and structure of a text
- occasionally understands the central meaning and/or details of a text when content and language are familiar
- occasionally understands common cultural references

INTERMEDIATE-MID

- can often read simple texts on familiar topics with some fluency and speed
- sometimes understands the meaning of new words from context
- sometimes distinguishes between main and supporting ideas which are accessible because of familiar content and/or language
- often understands new information from texts with familiar language
- sometimes uses textual cues such as sentence connectors and transitional devices to comprehend the meaning and structure of a text
- sometimes understands texts that are grammatically complex or on unfamiliar topics
- sometimes understands common cultural references

INTERMEDIATE-HIGH

- reads simple texts on familiar topics with some fluency and speed
- often understands the meaning of new words from context
- usually distinguishes between main and supporting ideas in texts which are accessible because of familiar content and/or language
- usually understands new information from texts with familiar language
- uses a variety of textual cues such as sentence connectors and pronoun reference to comprehend the meaning and structure of a text
- often understands texts that are grammatically complex or on unfamiliar topics
- often understands common cultural references

ADVANCED

- can usually adjust reading rate according to the text
- understands most new words given a clear context
- is able to use a wide range of complex textual cues to comprehend the meaning and structure of a text
- usually makes appropriate inferences
- usually understands the author's purpose, point of view, and tone
- sometimes understands figurative language
- can read a range of personal, professional, and academic texts
- usually understands texts that are either conceptually or linguistically complex
- usually understands common cultural references

ADVANCED-HIGH

- reads most texts fluently and rapidly, adjusting reading rate according to the text
- usually understands texts that are conceptually and/or linguistically complex
- makes appropriate inferences
- understands the author's purpose, point of view, and tone
- often understands figurative language
- understands most complex hypotheses, argumentation, and supported opinions
- can read a wide range of personal, professional, and academic texts
- understands common cultural references

SUPERIOR

- reads most texts fluently and rapidly, adjusting reading rate according to the text
- understands figurative language
- understands complex hypotheses, argumentation, and supported opinions
- understands most common and unusual cultural references

DISTINGUISHED

- reads virtually all texts fluently and rapidly, adjusting reading rate according to the text
- understands common and unusual cultural references
- reads at a level essentially indistinguishable from that of an educated native speaker

## SECOND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY DESCRIPTORS

## WRITING

NOVICE-LOW

- has little or no practical writing skills in English
- is sometimes able to write isolated words and/or common phrases

NOVICE-MID

- has minimal practical writing skill in English
- demonstrates limited awareness of sound/letter correspondence and mechanics
- can write some familiar numbers, letters, and words
- can fill in a simple form with basic biographical information

NOVICE-HIGH

- has some practical writing skill in English
- has limited independent expression
- demonstrates some awareness of sound/letter correspondence and mechanics
- can produce sentences and short phrases which have been previously learned
- uses simple vocabulary and sentence structure, often characterized by errors

INTERMEDIATE-LOW

- can write on some concrete and familiar topics
- can write original short texts using familiar vocabulary and structures
- often exhibits a lack of control over grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and spelling
- demonstrates some evidence of organizational ability

INTERMEDIATE-MID

- can write on a variety of concrete and familiar topics
- is able to organize and provide some support
- demonstrates limited control of sentence structure and punctuation to indicate sentence boundaries
- often uses inappropriate vocabulary or word forms

INTERMEDIATE-HIGH

- can write about topics relating to personal interests and special fields of competence
- shows some ability to write organized and developed text
- uses some cohesive devices appropriately
- displays some control of sentence structure and punctuation to indicate sentence boundaries, but often makes errors
- sometimes uses inappropriate vocabulary and word forms

ADVANCED

- can write effectively about a variety of topics, both concrete and abstract
- displays clear organization and development
- displays an awareness of audience and purpose
- uses cohesive devices effectively

- demonstrates an ability to integrate source material
- controls most kinds of sentence structure
- makes some errors in grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation, but they rarely interfere with communication

ADVANCED-HIGH

- can write about a variety of topics, both concrete and abstract, with precision and detail
- displays rhetorically effective organization and development
- demonstrates an ability to tailor writing to purpose and audience
- uses a range of cohesive devices effectively
- demonstrates some ability to integrate source material
- uses a variety of sentence structures for stylistic purposes
- makes some errors in grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation, but they do not interfere with effective communication

SUPERIOR

- writes effectively for formal and informal occasions, including writing on practical, social, academic, and professional topics
- displays strong organization and presents hypotheses, arguments, and points of view effectively
- consistently tailors writing to purpose and audience
- displays control of the conventions of a variety of writing types
- employs a variety of stylistic devices
- can incorporate a variety of source material effectively, using appropriate academic and linguistic conventions
- makes only minor or occasional errors, but they do not interfere with communication

DISTINGUISHED

- writes effectively on virtually any topic
- employs stylistic variation, sophisticated vocabulary, and a wide variety of sentence structure
- can tailor writing to match specific purpose and audience
- fully commands the nuances of the language
- has writing skills essentially indistinguishable from those of a sophisticated, educated native speaker

Source: ESL Intersegmental Project. (1996). *California Pathways: The second language student in public high schools, colleges, and universities.* Sacramento: Intersegmental Council of Academic Senates in conjunction with the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office. (Available from CATESOL, 1146 N. Central Avenue #195, Glendale, CA 91202).

The CATESOL Journal

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# Issues in Articulation: The Transition From Elementary to Secondary School

The population of English language learners in California has increased over 150% during the last decade. Currently, 24% of the K–12 population is limited English proficient (California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Unit, 1996). California's public schools face the challenge of providing an educationally sound program that meets the needs of these children. Instruction in English language development (ELD), also known as English as a second language (ESL), is an integral part of such a program. In order to serve English language learners, districts provide ELD instruction until students have attained sufficient fluency in English to succeed in a mainstream setting (Dolson & Prescott, 1995). This often means that students receive ELD instruction at both the elementary and secondary level. The articulation of ELD programs as English language learners transition from elementary to secondary school is a key component in providing a sound education for these children.

Elementary school programs include kindergarten through fifth or sixth grade. Students then enter the secondary level at a middle school (sixth through eighth grade) or a junior high school (seventh through eighth grade). In this transition, English language learners move from receiving ELD classes in a self-contained classroom or a pullout program at the elementary level to receiving ELD at the secondary level in classes that are sequential and tied to the stage of English language fluency which the student has achieved. The articulation between elementary and secondary levels is frequently minimal and the transition rocky.

Elementary teachers, while knowledgeable about their students, are unfamiliar with secondary programs and therefore unable to make informed recommendations about placement into the appropriate level of ELD. They

are concerned that their students will not receive the appropriate instruction and will fall between the cracks when no single teacher is responsible for them.

Secondary teachers are equally unfamiliar with ELD at the elementary level. They do not know how the elementary curriculum corresponds to the secondary ELD curriculum. Secondary ELD teachers often move transitioning English learners to a different level of ELD several weeks after the opening of school, having determined that the student's placement was inappropriate.

Secondary counselors are responsible for writing a program for each entering student. They are rarely familiar with the process of second language acquisition. Their decisions are guided sometimes by elementary recommendations, sometimes by their own assessment based on a brief oral interview and a review of the student's records, sometimes by the results of the oral English assessment required by the state, which measures only a low level of language knowledge (Schwartz, 1994), and less frequently by the results of an instrument designed for placement in a secondary ELD program.

Issues in articulation revolve around knowledge and understanding between the two levels, assignment of responsibility for placement, placement criteria which include literacy and correlation to district ELD standards, and lack of formal agreements or policy about transition and placement. Problems facing school districts in addressing the issues involved in articulation include a lack of awareness of the need for clear goals and practices by policy-level administrators, lack of personnel in the district central office or at the elementary and secondary sites to facilitate the process, lack of funding to support articulation practices, and lack of training for personnel involved in the decision-making process for transition of English language learners from the elementary to the secondary level.

### Initial Identification

California public K–12 schools are governed by state and federal requirements about the education of English language learners. These requirements cover issues such as identification and assessment of limited English proficient (LEP) students, redesignation of LEP students to fluent English proficient (FEP), and appropriate programs that meet the three state goals: to develop English language proficiency, to provide equal opportunity for academic success, and to promote cross-cultural understanding. There are also legal requirements for staffing, use of funds, and parent involvement.

All parents must complete a home language survey upon enrolling a

child in a new district. This form consists of four questions about the pattern of language use by the child and his or her family. The responses determine if the child needs to be assessed in English language proficiency. The questions are:

- Which language did your son or daughter learn when he or she first began to talk?
- What language does your son/daughter most frequently use at home?
- What language do you use most frequently to speak to your son/daughter?
- Name the language most often spoken *by the adults* at home.

A response other than "English" to the first three questions triggers the assessment process which determines if the child is LEP or FEP. If the response to Question 4 is a language other than English, assessment is optional.

The school district must assess the child in English listening comprehension and speaking ability, using a state-designated instrument, within 30 school days of enrollment. For students in kindergarten through grade two, English reading and writing assessments are optional. Literacy assessment in English is also optional for students in grades three through 12 if the students are designated LEP on the basis of the assessment in English comprehension and speaking. For students in grades three through 12 scoring fluent in oral proficiency, further assessment of English reading and writing proficiency is required. These students must meet district-established standards in reading and writing for their grade level in order to be initially designated FEP. If they do not meet these standards they are designated LEP. After the assessment is completed, parents are notified of the results. The student is placed in an appropriate program to meet his/her linguistic needs.

There are no state requirements for school districts to review the achievement of students initially identified as FEP. Some young English language learners (K–2) may score as FEP because the assessment used for students at this age is based on a small oral language sample. However, these students may still have significant second language issues. Anecdotal evidence indicates that many of these students are subsequently enrolled in remedial programs in both elementary and secondary school. Because they have been identified FEP, teachers knowledgeable about second language acquisition are not involved in planning how to address their learning needs. Many become "permanent underachievers" and stop attending school. We believe that this is one of the factors contributing to the high dropout rate among linguistically diverse students in California.

As LEP students develop English language proficiency, the district monitors their progress. Students remain identified LEP until they meet the requirements for redesignation to FEP. These requirements include demonstrating English oral proficiency on a state-designated instrument; receiving a teacher evaluation of English proficiency; meeting the district's standards on an objective assessment of reading, language arts and mathematics; meeting the district's standards on an empirically established range of performance in basic skills for nonminority English proficient students of the same age and grade. In addition, parent consultation must occur. On meeting the requirements, LEP students are redesignated FEP. They are no longer served by a specialized program, as they should now be able to succeed in a mainstream program, that is, a program without additional support for linguistically diverse students. FEP students are monitored, according to district policy, in order to ensure that they are succeeding without additional support.

ELD programs are mandated for all LEP students until they are redesignated FEP. These programs provide LEP students with ELD instruction appropriate to their age, grade and English proficiency level, using appropriate materials and methods for English language acquisition. School districts must have an adopted curriculum designed to develop proficiency in English as effectively and efficiently as possible.

In practice, identification procedures are usually followed, but services are not necessarily provided. In March of each year, every school in California must complete the annual language census (R-30). This census includes the numbers of LEP and FEP students, staffing information, program information, and the number of students redesignated since the previous census. Table 1 summarizes the enrollment of LEP students in instructional programs as of March, 1995 (Dolson & Mayer, 1995).

**Table 1**
**LEP Students in California by Program Category**

| *Program* | *Percentage LEP students* | *Number LEP Students* |
|---|---|---|
| ELD alone | 13.5 | 178,978 |
| ELD and SDAIE[a] | 16 | 211,386 |
| ELD, SDAIE and primary language support | 19.7 | 260,828 |
| ELD, academic subjects through primary language | 30.2 | 399,340 |
| No appropriate program | 20.6 | 273,235 |

*Note.* From *Language Census Report for California Public Schools* (p. 16), by California Department of Education, Educational Demographics Unit, October, 1996, Sacramento: Author. Reprinted by permission.

[a]Specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE) is an approach used to make content comprehensible to English language learners with intermediate fluency.

In drawing conclusions based on these data, it is important to remember that data are self-reported at the school site. Students may be listed as receiving a particular program because they are in a classroom where a teacher is certified to provide that program, but the teacher may not actually be providing it; or, an administrator may report students as enrolled in an appropriate program, even though there are not enough staff members certified to provide that program to all the students reported.

Also reported on the R-30 is the number of students redesignated at the school since the prior year's language census. At both the elementary and secondary levels, there may be a significant number of students who have met the criteria for redesignation and who are enrolled in a mainstream program but who have not been formally redesignated. This generally occurs because of a lack of emphasis on this function and a shortage of personnel and resources to gather the necessary data as reported above.

The 20.6% of LEP students who are listed as not being in an appropriate program and who do not receive ELD therefore includes three subgroups of students. The first subgroup consists of students who need the LEP services to which they are legally entitled, and who are not receiving these services. The second subgroup consists of students who have reached criteria for redesignation, but who have not yet been formally redesignated, as described in the preceding paragraph. The final subgroup consists of students who fall short of meeting the criteria in a single area, usually either writing skills or standardized test scores. Program emphasis given to identi-

fying these students and providing course work to target their needs as second language learners would result in more students being redesignated. Appropriate resources should be devoted to all three subgroups.

### Overview of Elementary Education

Most elementary schools are organized into self-contained classrooms, with a teacher responsible for all subject matter for around 30 students. Schools offer a variety of program models to serve the needs of their LEP students.

Some schools with significant numbers of LEP students from a single language group offer bilingual classes. In these classes, content areas are taught in the primary language while at a different time of the day, students receive ELD. In schools which use the "Eastman model", developed at Eastman Avenue School in Los Angeles Unified School District, students are assigned to homogeneous classes based on their level of development in ELD, but spend part of the day in mix time activities in which they interact with more advanced English speakers (Krashen & Biber, 1988). Besides daily ELD, beginning students receive core subjects (math, science, social studies, and language arts) in their primary language, while intermediate students receive core subjects in L2 through SDAIE—an approach used to make content comprehensible to English language learners with intermediate fluency. (For more information on this approach, also known as *sheltered content area instruction*, see CATESOL's 1993 position paper on specially designed academic instruction in English). Thus, LEP students who speak no English receive all core subjects in their primary language, while LEP students at the intermediate fluency stage of language development normally receive only social studies and language arts in their primary language, while science and math are delivered through a SDAIE approach (Dolson & Prescott, 1995).

Schools with students from a variety of language backgrounds may offer classes designed for LEP students, without primary language instruction. In these schools, LEP students also receive daily structured ELD. In some schools, several teachers may group and exchange students for a period of the day in order to offer ELD at different levels; however, classroom ELD generally encompasses a variety of levels. Other elementary schools enroll LEP students in a mainstream classroom but offer ELD, delivered by a certified resource teacher, on a pullout basis.[1]

### Overview of Secondary Education

Secondary schools have a variety of program configurations that include ELD, SDAIE, and primary language instruction. The curricula are departmentalized with ELD as a separate department.

Classes offered in the ELD (or ESL) department are usually sequential, with students moving from a beginning to intermediate to advanced level. In many secondary programs, LEP students enroll in two ELD classes daily, particularly at the early stages of English language development. A recent large-scale study of high school students has shown that the most advantaged second language students in the best instructional programs require five to seven years to reach the 50th normal curve equivalent (NCE) on standardized tests; those with limited schooling in their primary language take seven to 10 years (Collier, 1989). In an effort to address this need for continuing ELD, an increasing number of secondary programs are offering a fourth level of ELD to provide LEP students with appropriate instruction as they near redesignation.

Besides their ELD classes, LEP students enroll in core curriculum classes taught with SDAIE. Depending upon their diagnosed need, they may also take some subjects in their primary language and/or some mainstream classes as well as electives. Secondary LEP students often take English classes in a mainstream setting before they have met all the requirements for redesignation.

### Survey of K–12 Practitioners

In order to get a sense of current practice in the field, a short questionnaire was distributed to professionals involved with second language acquisition programs around the state. Nineteen respondents, representing 19 different districts, completed questionnaires. These respondents have a variety of titles. Some are district directors of bilingual education, directors of second language acquisition, or directors of categorical programs; others are program specialists or bilingual/ELD resource teachers. All are knowledgeable about legal requirements, well-trained in the field, and familiar with the practices in their respective districts. Many also train other educators to work with LEP students.

### Elementary Education in the Field

According to the respondents, the actual programs in elementary schools range from a complete bilingual program to no special program. Elementary schools with a significant population of Spanish speakers are likely to offer bilingual classes, with core subjects taught in Spanish only in grades K through 2 or 3. A district may designate as *bilingual* a class taught by a teacher who is not bilingual but who is assisted by a paraprofessional who speaks the students' primary language. The upper grades, 4 through 6, tend to be taught in English using a SDAIE approach.

For classes with students from diverse languages some districts designate an *LEP cluster* teacher who has been trained in ELD and SDAIE at each grade level. Other districts offer pullout ELD with all other subjects in the regular classroom. One district provides multigrade newcomer classes for students in the beginning levels of ELD.

In any of these models, instructional aides may provide primary language support or extra assistance in English. Unfortunately, some schools provide no special support of any kind for LEP students. It is also unclear, when districts report primary language support, whether students are learning the content area concepts in their primary language, or whether these concepts are being delivered in English and then explained in the primary language.

These districts reported no standard curriculum for ELD. Some respondents said they use a particular publishers' ESL materials as their curriculum. The most frequently mentioned were *Addison-Wesley ESL* and Santillana's *Bridge to Communication*—two ELD series which are currently state-adopted for use in California.

**Secondary Education in the Field**

According to respondents, the actual practices in secondary education are somewhat less than ideal. Respondents usually identified the ELD component of the program as adequate; most districts offer at least three levels, based upon student proficiency. Respondents expressed more concern about the core curriculum component.

Few districts offer a complete range of content area classes taught with primary language instruction or SDAIE. One respondent stated that SDAIE classes are "scattered and infrequent." Some districts call these content classes "transition" classes. Another respondent mentioned the small number of teachers in the school with the language development specialist (LDS) certificate ; these teachers frequently have both native English speakers and LEP students in their classes.

Respondents mentioned their schools offer "limited" primary language courses or "a few" such courses. Some respondents mentioned the use of bilingual aides as an alternative to primary language teachers; again, it is unclear if these aides assist students with their work in English, or if a primary language curriculum and textbooks are offered.

**Articulation Procedures**

Specific procedures for articulation between elementary and secondary schools were described by the survey respondents. In the following section, each question is listed, followed by a summary of the responses.

- Who decides which students will be placed in ESL classes? Who decides what classes they will take?

Many respondents indicated that this decision is made by the secondary school counselor. Some respondents mentioned elementary ELD staff; bilingual office coordinator; secondary ELD/ESL staff; and principals. Some districts have specific criteria for the various levels of ESL courses offered. A few respondents said that parents and students have input in course selection.

- On what basis is this decision made? What, if any, assessment instrument is used?

Most respondents mentioned some kind of testing, using either district developed tests or standardized tests. Some districts review students' elementary school records, using the year-end tests given at the elementary school. A few respondents mentioned using the recommendations of the elementary school staff. However, it appears that many districts treat the entering student transferring from an elementary school just the same as any other entering student; they are given an informal interview or a battery of tests at the school site or at a Newcomer Center.

Tests mentioned by the respondents are described in Figure 1:

**Figure 1**
**Tests Used for Placement in Secondary Schools**

***Oral English Proficiency Tests***

Bilingual Syntax Measure (BSM)[a]
Language Assessment Scales- Oral (LAS-O)[a]
Student Oral Language Observation Matrix (SOLOM)[b]
Idea Proficiency Test (IPT)
Woodcock-Muñoz[a]

***Tests of Literacy***

Language Assessment Scales–Reading & Writing (LAS-R/W)[a]
Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS)[c]
California Achievement Test (CAT)
Idea Proficiency Test (IPT) Reading & Writing
Woodcock-Muñoz[a]

*Note.* [a] also available in Spanish
[b] observational inventory which may be done in any language
[c] SABE is a Spanish language version

Four of the oral tests mentioned above, the BSM, LAS-O, IPT and Woodcock-Muñoz, are among the tests approved by the state of California for initial identification of LEP students. The other two approved tests, the Basic Inventory of Natural Language (BINL) and the Quick Start in English (QSE), were not mentioned by the respondents. The CTBS and CAT are achievement tests given to mainstream students. Some districts use one of the standardized tests; some use a district-developed test for reading and writing; some review student grades or obtain a writing sample. It is important to note that there are no state requirements or guidelines for assessment of students for purposes of articulation, nor are there guidelines for placement of students in leveled ELD courses at the secondary schools.

- What is your impression of your district's procedure for handling this transition (elementary to secondary)?

Only about a third of those surveyed were satisfied with their procedure and felt it worked well.

Another third of those surveyed were quite dissatisfied. Some answered this question by saying simply "It's terrible" or "It's a disaster." Another respondent felt responsible for monitoring the entire process; without this person's constant vigilance, students would be misplaced. Reference was made to students "falling through the cracks."

Most of the others indicated a need to improve the process. As one respondent stated, "Procedure is excellent–implementation a bit choppy." Elementary schools may misplace students because they do not understand the different levels of ELD offered at the secondary site or the nature of the secondary curriculum. Secondary counselors may not be trained to understand language assessment. Even when the ELD staff provides data, the counselor may not understand how to interpret it. In many instances, a student is placed solely based upon a brief oral interview with a counselor or site administrator.

Many respondents mentioned the need for elementary school staff and secondary school staff to meet together; some indicated they are already working on this issue. In these meetings, the elementary and secondary school staff try to learn about one another's programs.

Considering that our respondents are among the most knowledgeable and best trained in the state, and that they also represent districts with significant numbers of LEP students, one can only speculate on the situation in districts not included in our informal study.

## Recommendations

In elementary school, the student is part of a self-contained classroom with 30 to 35 classmates and, primarily, one teacher. In secondary school, the student has five or six different classes, each with a different teacher and with the potential for 150 to 165 classmates. This transition is difficult for the adolescent student, particularly for the student who is still mastering English. LEP students may be placed in a program that is not appropriate for their level of proficiency in English. Secondary teachers, each with 150 to 165 students, may not be able to determine if an LEP student is misplaced in this respect.

Based upon our knowledge of legal requirements and second language acquisition research, combined with this overview of current practice in the schools, we have developed the following recommendations for articulation between elementary and secondary school, aimed at ensuring a successful transition from elementary ELD to secondary ELD:

- A standardized assessment instrument designed for secondary LEP students should be mandated in the placement process for LEP students entering secondary school.
- The assessment instrument must include reading and writing, to ensure that placement is not based solely on oral proficiency. Second language learners generally become conversationally fluent within three to four years but may not yet have acquired the literacy and academic language skills to succeed in a secondary program. Therefore, placement must be based on assessment in all of the skill areas, listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Assessment for placement must be tied to the district's content standards for ELD courses.
- Assessment and placement must be done by certificated staff with expertise in the area of second language acquisition. Counselors involved in programming must receive training in the area of second language acquisition.
- Elementary teachers and secondary teachers should be knowledgeable about each other's ELD programs. Districts must establish professional development opportunities to facilitate this aspect of articulation.
- Districts must establish a coordinated procedure for this assessment, taking advantage of the elementary staff's knowledge and experience of the students but involving the secondary staff who will be assisting students to continue their education and language learning.

One of the survey respondents offered a procedure which appears both promising and workable. In February before programming for the next school year begins, district personnel test all the students who will be moving to the next level. They make tentative placements based upon district criteria. These results are then shared with the feeder school teachers, who have the opportunity to request changes based upon their knowledge of the students. The final lists of the ESL students and their recommended programs are forwarded to the secondary counselors prior to the spring scheduling of incoming students.

As more districts design and implement coordinated articulation procedures, the educational programs offered in our K–12 school system will better meet the needs of California's English language learners.

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## Appendix
## Survey of K–12 Practitioners

CATESOL (California Association of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) is gathering data on the transition of LEP students from elementary to secondary school. Your help in filling out this survey is greatly appreciated.

In your district, when LEP students leave elementary school and begin secondary school,

1. Who decides which students will be placed in ESL classes?
2. Who decides what classes they will take?
3. On what basis is this decision made?
4. What, if any, assessment instrument (test) is used?

Please describe your elementary school program for LEP students.

Please describe your secondary school program for LEP students.

What is your impression of your district's procedure for handling this transition (elementary to secondary school)?

*Thank you for your participation.*

The CATESOL Journal

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# Articulation Between Segments: Secondary to Postsecondary Programs

As a part-time instructor of English as a second language (ESL) at the community college level, I often hear complaints that high schools have not prepared ESL students for success in college-level programs. As a full-time program specialist for a midsize public school district, I hear high school teachers complain that middle schools have not prepared ESL students for the demands of high school programs. The purpose of this article is to clarify the status of ESL instruction in secondary programs so that California educators at different levels may begin the dialogue of articulation. In focusing on the problems, it is not my intent to paint a depressing portrait; reality suggests, however, that if our programs were better, there would be little need for this discussion.

In the state of California, rapidly shifting demographics have affected K–12 programs by creating both the need to augment traditional course offerings with ESL instruction, content instruction in primary languages (also called *bilingual instruction*), and specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE).[1] To add to the base provided by ESL classes, such special courses for English language learners have in turn created a need for teachers trained to deliver content in primary language or SDAIE (see Hawkins, in press). Much like the familiar nursery rhyme "The House That Jack Built," meeting the needs of second language learners has created a chain of events culminating in legislation establishing special certification with specialized credentials (cross-cultural, language and academic development—CLAD—and bilingual, cross-cultural, language and academic development—BCLAD) and then in additional legislation (SB 1969) authorizing local district certification for those who cannot or will not obtain state certification. Whichever path has been chosen, the state has been consistently clear on its objectives: To successfully teach English language learners, teachers require a working understanding of the language

acquisition process and strategies which will help students understand what is being taught. Since between a quarter and a third of California's students are English language learners, certification is only the first step.

In contrast to the coherent philosophy presented by the credentialing options, program options have not been mandated by the state. Consequently, the state has not promoted a single model for educating English language learners. Although the accreditation process directed by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) suggests that the results of self-study be used to improve student learning and school programs—and although the coordinated compliance review (CCR) process requires that English language learners be provided with (a) daily instruction in ESL, (b) content concepts in their primary languages, and (c) SDAIE instruction when learners have attained sufficient English fluency to profit from all-English instruction—these configurations are based more upon federal case law than upon California state statute. Daily instruction in English is mandated, yet no specific amount of time is required. Consequently, some districts provide two hours of daily ESL; other districts provide less. And although all ESL teachers are required to have appropriate authorization for second language instruction, in many instances, in a clear violation of state education code, paraprofessionals still provide ESL instruction for English language learners.

### Secondary Programs

To even the most casual observer, there is enormous diversity and variety in secondary (i.e., grades 6–12) programs for English language learners in the state of California. State program goals for English language learners are these:

> To develop fluency in English in each student as effectively and efficiently as possible; promote students' positive self-image; promote cross-cultural understanding; and provide equal opportunity for academic achievement, including, when necessary, academic instruction through the primary language (California Department of Education, 1995, p. 1).

Although these general program guidelines have been provided, and although some state money for supplemental services has been allocated for some school districts, resources have generally not been widely available or extended to offer assistance to districts in terms of capacity to deliver effective instruction. Despite credentialing statutes, bilingual teachers are in

short supply and few districts are able to offer a stipend to attract them. Credentialed ESL and SDAIE teachers are available, but without mentoring or extensive staff development, many are unable to implement teaching strategies which will assist English language learners in attaining academic success, let alone prepare them for the intellectual rigors of the post secondary academic environment. So, although state code and case law have established parameters within which most programs function, in addition to teacher preparation, the contemporary issues at the heart of articulation remain those of student access and program quality.

At the elementary and secondary levels, all districts are required to identify and assess the English proficiency and primary language skills of all second language speakers. Based upon the assessment, students are placed in their secondary programs. It may be helpful at this point to describe a number of state-permitted secondary program options.

**ESL-only**

In districts in which students are able to demonstrate success on nationally normed assessment instruments like the California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), English language learners are provided with ESL instruction only until they can be mainstreamed. ESL instruction may be provided by a regularly scheduled course or by means of a pullout program. In general, students in these programs may be relatively affluent and have come from situations in which English was studied in the home country—sometimes in school and sometimes with a private tutor. Such students generally also have strong academic backgrounds allowing them to succeed in content courses in which the content and concepts are familiar and only the language of delivery is unfamiliar.[2]

**ESL Plus SDAIE**

This option is frequently offered by districts with large mixed-language populations. In addition to ESL instruction, English language learners are enrolled in classes taught with SDAIE methodology.[3] In the middle grades, this may be a self-contained classroom in which the teacher is responsible for ESL and SDAIE in all the content areas. At the secondary level, students may be programmed into ESL and SDAIE math, science, and social science classes, for example.

**ESL Plus Bilingual**

This option is offered by districts with large groups of students who speak the same primary language (often Spanish). In addition to ESL, academic content is delivered by teachers fluent in the primary language who

teach in the language spoken by the students. In addition to finding appropriately trained and credentialed bilingual teachers, secondary programs often have difficulty finding primary language high school textbooks to support this approach. Though textbooks are available outside the United States, locating, reviewing, and matching the content to California content frameworks is problematic.

**ESL Plus Bilingual Plus SDAIE**

This option combines the previous two approaches. In addition to ESL, students enrolled in such programs may have SDAIE with bilingual support or a combination of SDAIE and bilingual classes.

If we extrapolate from the several intensively studied schools described in a study commissioned by the California Legislature (Minicucci & Olsen, 1992), most California secondary programs do not provide broadly comprehensive course offerings for their English language learners. Though most districts offer some form of ESL classes, taught by an appropriately trained and credentialed teacher, offerings are not consistent. Some ESL students are served in programs separated from other language arts classes; some ESL students are served in self-contained middle school programs; some students who demonstrate ESL features are mainstreamed, that is, mixed in with native or fluent speakers of English. In such cases their needs are not served by an ESL specialist. Some ESL programs are pullout—that is, students are pulled out of a regularly scheduled class for intensive ESL lessons. Those students pulled out also differ from program to program: Some such programs serve only beginning students; others serve all those perceived by the classroom teacher as needing assistance. In pullout ESL programs, instruction should be delivered by an appropriately credentialed teacher, but it is common knowledge that some programs serve English language learners with paraprofessionals.

The lack of consistency also shows up in the SDAIE or bilingual programs as well. Due to low numbers of English language learners, some middle schools offer no SDAIE classes. And at the high school level, SDAIE courses have frequently been placed in the general track but not the college preparatory programs. This means that life or physical science may be available, but not biology or physics. Bilingual courses may offer college preparatory credit but be limited by teachers available so that a school with one bilingual social science teacher may offer U.S. history or government but not algebra or geometry. Class size also limits offerings: When courses are restricted to certain grade levels (for example, Biology for 10th grade, U. S. history for 11th and government for 12th), only a handful of students may be in need of SDAIE or bilingual courses. Staffing ratios and funding

levels may not permit using one teacher for less than 22 or so students. This explains why some high-level courses like chemistry or calculus are almost never offered in either a SDAIE or bilingual delivery mode.

Diversity is the last factor to be considered in a portrayal of secondary programs for English language learners. Even relatively small districts may contain students with more than two dozen native languages. Large urban districts may serve students from more than 50 language backgrounds. Several additional variables compound this linguistic diversity: prior schooling experience, rural versus urban background, immigrant status in the United States (documented vs. undocumented), and socioeconomic status. It is not atypical for an ESL classroom of 30 or so to contain students who represent refugee-, immigrant-, and undocumented-status families, rural or migrant farming backgrounds as well as urban-technological or middle-management, and low primary language literacy as well as well-prepared academic backgrounds. No single program option could ever serve such diversity.

## Factors Inhibiting Transfer Between Segments

Trying to describe statewide secondary programs is analogous to the folktale of the blind men and the elephant: We each see the program most familiar to us. However, from the information available, some general patterns emerge.

### Insufficient Secondary Courses

Although most secondary educators understand that graduation from high school marks a transition between segments and although most English language learners express a desire to continue their education, these expectations often do not match reality. If students, for whatever reasons, have not participated in college preparatory programs, they often are only eligible for minimum wage entry-level positions or study at a community college. Clearly, limited secondary course offerings affect career and post-secondary pathways for English language learners.

### Lack of Rigor/Low Expectations

Some students, who have been mainstreamed or given the opportunity for SDAIE or bilingual courses may be handicapped in another way. This is a much more subtle, and sensitive, situation for it involves issues of quality. Some SDAIE courses have been taught by teachers who lack knowledge of second language acquisition processes; such teachers and others who became credentialed by passing the LDS exam may also lack appropriate strategies for delivering grade-level content. Often, these teachers are aware

that they lack strategies to make the content available, and make statements like, "I have my LDS but I still don't know how to teach my kids." For such teachers, expectations may be high—they want their students to meet the course objectives. Unfortunately, because they lack specific strategies to teach content reading, or lack understanding of how to create a cognitive scaffold for new information, they do not infuse their classes with academic rigor. Instead, they opt for time-worn patterns: Listen to the lecture, take notes, read the chapter, answer the questions, take the multiple choice or short-answer test. And, though some English language learners do succeed in such settings, many do not. More troubling, however, are those teachers who perceive their students as lacking ability. Then low expectations and lack of rigor have been translated into the "dumbing" or watering-down of course standards. Such teachers tend to blame either the victim ("Those kids can't learn"), or teachers at the previous level ("Those kids from middle school can't do the work here"). Even the use of *those* suggests a distancing. Students coming from backgrounds which had low expectations and/or lack of rigor are poorly prepared for success even at the community college level.

**Lack of Teaching Strategies**

As suggested previously, the lack of teaching strategies appropriate for second language speakers is a common problem at the secondary level. Like many of us, including our mainstream and SDAIE peers, some bilingual teachers were credentialed before preparation programs or staff development began to focus on strategies designed to build academic knowledge. These teachers may still favor a transmission mode of instruction. Students coming from this model may have little experience with collaborative projects, with classroom interactions (such as partner or small group discussions), or with presentations or exhibitions of learning. Teachers may be unfamiliar with the role of peer discussion in building academic understanding, with the use of visual organizers to reformulate textual knowledge, or with the *how* of making students responsible for their own learning (i.e., teaching them how to take notes, how to organize a class folder, how to keep track of assignments, or how to prepare for class sessions and examinations). It is not unusual for students to graduate from high school never having read a book independently all the way through. Though students may have the ability to do so, they have simply never been given the opportunity because their teachers lacked the strategies to make content accessible through avenues extending beyond the transmission mode.

**Varied Exit Criteria**

Background factors like those discussed are critical to the success of students who transfer between schools or between program segments—from middle to high school, from high school to community college, state college, or university. Since all public programs have an assessment process to assist in accurate placement of students, particularly in language and mathematics classes, it is common for a student to exit ESL classes in one segment and to reenter them at the next. In addition to damaging self-esteem, in the minds of students this forward/backward movement lends an arbitrary air to solid programmatic decisions. "I don't belong here/know why I'm in your class. I graduated from ESL at my other school" are familiar phrases to many teachers in high school, community college, and even university programs.[4] Though many districts have begun the process of internal articulation to define ESL program exit criteria, no uniform statewide standard exists.

Another problem, related to varied exit criteria, is the recognition that some students officially identified as fluent English speakers (FEP) are still English language learners in need of language development classes. It is not unusual for mainstream secondary classrooms to contain students who lack English literacy skills despite their "fluent" label. Background investigations often reveal one or more of several scenarios: redesignation in the primary grades (K–2) based on oral English fluency only; early mainstreaming in all-English programs before the child has learned to read and write in the primary language; early identification as "remedial" in English with subsequent placement in remedial programs designed for native speakers of English; no consistent program of English language development or ESL in the elementary grades. Elementary grade reports forwarded to the high school usually depict average students; teacher comments often note such characteristics as *hard worker, cooperative, friendly.* Students in this category become and remain orally fluent in their elementary programs but all too frequently have never developed the academic skills necessary for success in secondary programs. Consequently, this is an at-risk population.

**Diverse Educational Backgrounds and Preparations**

The difficulty of program uniformity is compounded within each segment by students who come to California with strong educational backgrounds in their home countries. Such students often have had opportunities to participate in challenging academic and college preparatory programs—their superior background knowledge often contributes to positive stereotyping—and a consequent negative labeling of their classmates who have been schooled in United States settings or arrived less well prepared.

Some students, particularly at the postsecondary level, may have arrived in late adolescence. Although public high schools can enroll students who have not passed their 18th birthday, many high schools turn 16- and 17-year-old students aside into adult or vocational programs. And although public schools by statute can continue to serve students past their 18th birthdays, some will force out even well-performing ESL students by telling them that they must go to adult programs after their 18th birthday.

Imagine for a moment a hypothetical classroom. Some students have moved into the class because they have succeeded at the previous level. Others have been placed by an assessment instrument which measured their oral production and syntax. When students complete the first writing assessment, they present a range of writing abilities—from words and phrases to organized paragraphs; when students speak, they exhibit a similar range of oral proficiency. As time progresses, some students demonstrate a great amount of world knowledge and others, very little; some students have been well-schooled in their own countries and some have been in California for four or five years. At the end of the course, which students are likely to be perceived as more successful and better prepared to move on? The issue of educational background and life experiences reverberates at every segment of public education.

## Factors Which Improve Access and Movement Between Secondary and Postsecondary Programs

From all that has been said, several observations emerge. Access to postsecondary opportunities is improved when students have been well-prepared by their secondary programs. Three factors stand out: sufficient numbers of courses, well-developed curriculum offerings, and adequately trained teachers.

### Sufficient Numbers of Courses

Course offerings must serve the needs of students in the school. Schools should reexamine prerequisites for courses. If a high school has only 30 limited-English Spanish speakers, why must grade level be the criterion which determines who is eligible for U. S. history or government? Why can only 10th grade students take biology? Why is the reading score on a nationally normed test like the CTBS used as the sole criterion for entrance into college preparatory classes? Pushed by changing demographics, some schools have responded by collapsing offerings rather than carefully examining existing courses and their prerequisites. Teachers and program administrators need to ask challenging questions: Why is only the general track offered in SDAIE? If we have three ESL classes, why is each

one multilevel? If we have a significant population of newcomer Spanish speakers with low primary language literacy, why can't we have courses to develop their literacy skills in this language well?

**Well-Developed Curriculum**

Complementing the notion of a sufficient number is that of the right kind of courses. The foundation for school success is the ESL course: Good programs recognize a student's developmental needs in the language acquisition process and meet these needs at various levels. Most of us agree that those new to the language need a program which offers an opportunity to develop oral survival skills and a foundation for English literacy. Those whose oral English has emerged need a program which builds the vocabulary and skills necessary for academic success. The upper levels of such a program should concentrate on reading—both content and literature—and writing for different purposes and audiences. In most programs, English language development is narrowly perceived as the province of the ESL classroom. In reality, for English language learners, language development is the responsibility of the entire school program. This means that descriptions of SDAIE courses should not merely mirror the content objectives of the mainstream but instead prioritize the content objectives and reflect the academic skills which will be developed. This means that English teachers whose classes are filled with second language speakers who have exited the ESL program need to examine the textbook selections as well as the strategies they use. Language development does not end with ESL. An adequate secondary program recognizes that second language students need courses which will move them to advanced levels of English language proficiency in all the content areas.

**Ability to Convey Concepts to L2 Learners**

The final factor pertains to staff development and status. Though the state has determined appropriate credentialing for English language development and SDAIE teachers, the ability to convey concepts depends upon strategies. It is through strategy that theory becomes application. Once sufficient appropriate and rigorous ESL, ELD and SDAIE courses are offered, it becomes imperative that programs assume the responsibility of ensuring that teachers have the support and skills to deliver the concepts. Though support and skills are integral to the success of programs for second language learners, it would be misleading to limit support to staff development and appropriate textbooks or materials. Staff development brings teachers with similar needs together and provides the setting and opportunity to work out common instructional problems and solutions.

Appropriate textbooks are chosen by those who will use them as resources and are provided as part of the base program of the school. The needs of second language learners require audiovisual materials to supplement strategies and textbooks. These all contribute to the ability to convey subject matter to English language learners. But support also means acknowledging the knowledge and skills of bilingual, ESL, SDAIE and ELD teachers. Support also means providing equal access for teachers and their students to facilities like the computer lab and library. Support also means recognizing the contributions of English language learners to the school community—and including them as a part of the fabric of school life. When neither the courses, nor the teachers, nor the students are marginalized, all these complex factors work together to propel students toward academic success.

When students have been given access to a broad spectrum of courses and engaged in challenging work appropriate to their level of English proficiency, then access is improved and barriers to movement between levels are lowered or removed.

## Efforts to Improve Access

Each individual school or program is capable of making efforts to improve access. To go forward, a school must know where it is and who it serves.

### Data

Data are essential. Apocryphal stories and anecdotes are one form of data, but desegregated data, of the sort collected by every educational institution are much better. Data programs should have the ability to sort information by gender, ethnicity, nationality, first language, prior schooling, length of time in the United States, as well as grade-point average (GPA), attendance, and so forth—so schools could (for example) analyze the GPA of all students from Vietnam and compare recent arrivals with Vietnamese students here for more than four years; or examine the number of Spanish-speaking students programmed into remedial courses and analyze the factors which may be contributing to performance; or collect rates of absenteeism among Cantonese-speaking males from Hong Kong and compare the rate to general rates of absenteeism. Desegregated data provide a platform for asking questions, identifying problems, and brainstorming solutions.

**Programming**

Schools must pay attention to programming. In some schools the master calendar is constructed without regard to student needs. For instance, although projected fall enrollment for beginning ESL may consistently suggest a need for three classes, year after year only two are scheduled. Students who enroll in mid-September often sit in the cafeteria until an enrollment formula is met. (Because of state funding requirements, a sufficient number of students at each level must enroll/appear to permit the addition of a class or classes at the level in question.) Sometimes assessment information is disregarded by those who determine student programs. For example, a student who has low primary language literacy and whose assessment profile indicates a need for primary language support may not be programmed into the appropriate classes because of space limitations, scheduling conflicts, or misunderstanding of the purpose of bilingual support. Some counselors acquiesce to parental requests for "status" courses (and unwittingly foster the perceived low status of ESL and bilingual programs); in the process they also deviate from an assessment-based program sequence. Attention to programming assures that all students will obtain access to the classes which they need to meet graduation requirements and post-secondary goals.

**Articulation**

Articulation within and across segments can improve these situations. At the school level, those responsible for programs (teachers and administrators) need to examine the needs of second language learners, the course offerings, and the delivery of subject matter. This should be an ongoing process based on a commitment to academic success for all students. Based on the analysis of data, program changes can evolve. Program goals and standards should be clearly described to students and their parents in the language of the home so that parents will understand how academic success is developed in their children. For example, some secondary schools hold a separate parent night for incoming ninth grade English language learners and provide translators to answer questions about high school curriculum and policies. Some secondary schools also host a college night for parents of 11th and 12th grade English language learners, again providing translators to ensure the comprehensibility of this opportunity to understand both academic qualifications for entrance and support through financial aid.

Because counselors are responsible for programming students, it is crucial that they be included in any articulation program so that they will be aware of course standards and offerings. Too often, high school counselors

assume that English language learners must attend community college before moving on to the university.

Efforts to improve articulation occur across the levels. Because secondary graduates who are English language learners are often ineligible for the state university systems, community colleges are often impacted with high school graduates who have no recent ESL background. When these students take placement examinations, some are referred to community college ESL programs, others to remedial classes. Some students perceive a loss of status in a movement "back" to ESL. Others are poorly served by remedial programs designed for native speakers. Secondary schools and some colleges have begun to dialogue, to learn about one another's programs and how they can collaborate for the benefit of students.

Some examples: In the fall of 1996, Pasadena City College (PCC) hosted a Saturday miniconference for teachers within its attendance area for the purpose of articulating its program and developing a dialogue between teachers in various high school districts.[5] For a first effort, attendance was broadly distributed through PCC's service region; both groups of educators learned from one another. PCC followed up by hosting the UCLA Teaching Analytical Writing Project on the PCC campus (see Peitzman, this volume).

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) programs have been established throughout California. AVID programs, which identify underachieving students most underrepresented in California post-secondary institutions, have demonstrated a rise in both college preparation for under-represented students as well as college applications.[6]

Various other innovations also exist. An expanded Title VII program between Mission High School in San Francisco Unified School District and San Francisco State University continues to provide opportunities for underrepresented students to prepare for college enrollment through a focus on academic reading and study skills.[7] All of us can learn of articulation efforts and programs by attending national, statewide, and local conferences. Regional and state CATESOL conferences continue to provide critical opportunities to articulate between segments.

In the last 20 years, rapidly changing demographics have posed an amazing challenge to California high schools. In general, schools have met that challenge well, gradually adding ESL, bilingual, and SDAIE classes in response to the needs of their students. Many did this willingly, advocating for and empowering their students. The challenges for the next decade will of necessity involve more than merely providing courses: The challenges are to focus on a broad range of courses which meet the needs of English language learners and to develop quality within each program of instruction.

No one segment can successfully meet this challenge alone. It is through articulation and working together that we will improve our programs for the benefit of all. ■

**Endnotes**

1. SDAIE classes, sometimes called *sheltered*, are offered to second language speakers who have reached oral fluency in English. For a more complete description, see the CATESOL position paper on specially designed academic instruction in English.

2. Please note that recent policy changes in the California Department of Education permit the ESL-only option to be used more frequently than it may have been in the past.

3. SDAIE methodology consists of strategies to make content comprehensible through an emphasis on the use of visuals, collaborative strategies, graphic organizers, and cognitive scaffolding.

4. For a discussion of case histories of ESL students at UCLA, see Brinton, D., & Mano, S. (1994) in F. Peitzman & G. Gadda, (Eds.) *With different eyes: Insights into teaching language minority students across the disciplines.* (pp. 1–21). White Plains, NY: Longman.

5. For information, contact Ginny Heringer, ESL coordinator at Pasadena City College.

6. For AVID information or to visit an AVID program, contact the AVID Center, San Diego County Office of Education at (619) 291-3559 or a local county office of education.

7. For information on this program, contact Kate Kinsella, STEP to College Program, San Francisco Unified School District.

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The CATESOL Journal

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# Noncredit Students in California Community Colleges: A Community at Risk

The early 1980s saw a dramatic increase in the number of second language students entering community college noncredit ESL classes throughout California. In response to this need, many noncredit continuing education programs expanded offerings in the community and at the major noncredit sites. Because of the rapid expansion, many noncredit ESL programs were developed independently from the credit ESL programs, and little effort was given to articulation of curriculum. Even in those community colleges where attempts were made to articulate the two programs and create a continuum of language instruction, inherent student issues such as individual goals, financial need, and levels of educational preparation were not fully explored, and few noncredit students moved into college-credit ESL classes.

Although in many instances faculty and administrators continued to discuss the need to more closely articulate the two programs, few formal efforts were undertaken. Consequently, it was not unusual for the two ESL programs to develop independently of each other and for the separate faculty groups to have little contact beyond the efforts of a few individuals. However, when the amnesty program of the late 1980s brought an overwhelming number of students into California college districts via noncredit instruction, the resulting enrollment expansion made it necessary for districts to reexamine how noncredit ESL students could be matriculated to compensate for a declining credit student population.

It became apparent that with shrinking state dollars for education and a downward shift in credit enrollments, community colleges that fared best throughout the state were those which had large, growing noncredit programs that could offset financial losses on the credit side. The higher reimbursement for college-credit ADA, even with the state imposed enrollment limitations, made the movement of students into credit offerings highly desirable.

In developing effective matriculation models, community colleges faced several challenges. One of these was the reluctance on the part of noncredit and credit faculty groups to recognize the need to articulate courses to ensure a smooth instructional transition from noncredit instruction to credit. Students who completed the highest level of noncredit instruction often had to be tested for placement in credit ESL courses, and expectations for student success in these classes were not clearly defined for the noncredit faculty. One result of this was the sense on the part of the college-credit English/ESL faculty that matriculated students entering their classes were underprepared, especially in the area of writing. The internal college culture often perceived the problem as stemming from the differences in "casual" noncredit and "academic" instruction.

It also became very clear to college districts that many noncredit ESL students lacked knowledge of how to access college programs, and that proximity to classes was a key enrollment factor. While locating noncredit programs in the community was critical for students, it presented a major challenge when students had to leave local sites and move to one of the two college campuses. Second language students also found it extremely difficult to initially maneuver through the registration process, and because many colleges maintained separate student numbers and data bases for noncredit and credit students, re-registering was often required when students entered credit ESL classes.

In 1986, Rancho Santiago College, a large urban community college in Orange County, applied for and received a Title III grant that was renewable for three years at approximately $200,000 per year. One goal of this federal grant, designed to financially strengthen postsecondary institutions, was to transition noncredit ESL students into college-credit programs, including English as a second language. Developing such a model for Rancho Santiago College made it clear that the students enrolled in the two college ESL programs, credit and noncredit, had unique needs that had to be addressed and that merely establishing courses would not result in an effective or efficient student matriculation model.

The ACCESS Program developed from this federal Title III grant attempted to address these issues through a model with both instructional and student service components. The instructional component focused on two areas, reading and mathematics. Courses developed in these disciplines were designed to bridge the gap between the basic skills of noncredit instruction and the entry level courses in the college. These courses were offered on the Santa Ana college campus and scheduled so that matriculated students could take classes in multiple disciplines as indicated through individual student assessment. Because the college did not offer specific

reading classes for second language learners, an ACCESS reading class was developed to meet the reading needs of transitioning students.

However, the transition class that proved to be most successful was Counseling N45: *Orientation to College,* offered at continuing education sites in the community and designed to provide students with knowledge about college and university systems as well as specific information about Rancho Santiago College programs. Students were assisted with registration, fees were collected, and a field trip to the college campus was scheduled. Through enrollment in this course, students "became" college students—they were offered early registration and were familiarized with services available to them on the campus. Although this approach required a major commitment of resources, students quickly learned how to handle the college system and required fewer student support services.

The student services component of the ACCESS Program emphasized outreach, orientation, assessment, and ongoing counseling support. Presentations were given in the noncredit basic skills classes and in the higher levels of ESL. In order to address faculty concerns about student enrollments and levels of readiness, faculty were recruited to assist with outreach activities and student assessment. Student placement became a joint effort with input from all faculty concerned. Students had a designated counseling location at the Santa Ana campus, where support was readily available. This was also where program staff were housed and student records maintained. Linking matriculating students with a specific program and clearly identifying services was critical for student success.

At the end of the three-year grant period, the program was incorporated into the college structure, and the student services component was integrated into the existing student support system. Although the counseling staff continued to be designated as ACCESS staff, the scope of their responsibility was expanded to include other district counseling activities. Student outreach activities recognized as crucial for student transition were maintained but also made part of overall college activities.

Although Rancho Santiago College made a commitment to have noncredit and credit ESL course offerings at all major sites, limited instructional space made this difficult to achieve. However, through the development of the ACCESS Program, it became clear that any successful matriculation model must include a structure that provided easily accessible instruction regardless of student level, and that dialogue between faculty in the two divisions was a key factor for any approach. In addition, issues surrounding student placement, effective assessment practices, course content, credit and noncredit designation, and enrollment in impacted disciplines must be clearly identified and resolved with student success as the focus.

Unfortunately, recent educational developments and trends at the state level continue to compound the issue of matriculation by excluding noncredit students from the many areas of reform that have shaped instructional practices at California community colleges. Matriculation dollars that focus only on students enrolled for credit have made it difficult for colleges to provide services for the growing number of second language students who enter the system through noncredit programs. The change in Title V2 regulations that provide for the development of nondegree-applicable courses, funded at the higher rate of state apportionment, has created a disincentive for many colleges to expand their noncredit offerings even though there is an increasing number of students, especially second language learners, for whom this mode of instruction is more appropriate.

In assessing current statewide practices, instructional models with sequential courses that fail to address the time needed to effectively acquire language skills if matriculation is to be even a possibility, have helped to create a group of students in local communities with limited access to higher levels of education. Adding to this problem is the tendency for colleges to provide libraries, financial aid offices, and specially designed outreach and support programs only on credit campuses, effectively excluding the noncredit students whose needs for these services are in many cases greater than those of other students. The main source of change, however, has to come from within the culture of the individual colleges. The administration, faculty, and staff have to recognize that the second language student population is a dynamic population and that to ignore the unique instructional needs of these students puts colleges, communities, and ultimately the state at risk. ■

The CATESOL Journal

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# Passages Between the Community College and the California State University System

The framework for higher education in California, the Master Plan (Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education, 1987), establishes three routes for students to pursue their lower division postsecondary coursework. Students can attend a California State University (CSU) if they rank in the upper one third of California high school graduates[1] and have completed a prescribed set of 15 college preparatory courses (the a-f requirements, see Appendix A in Lane, Brinton, & Erickson, this volume). Students in the upper one eighth can attend a University of California (UC) campus. All other students who are 18 years old and hold a high school diploma or can demonstrate "an ability to benefit" from instruction can attend a California community college (Commission for the Review of the Master Plan, 1987, pp. 14-15). According to the Master Plan, all three groups of students, after having completed their general education coursework, will be at the same point—ready to commence upper division general education courses and required courses in their majors at a four-year university.

This vision has never meshed well with reality. The disjunction between the community colleges and the CSU is especially crucial since so many CSU students—up to 80% on some CSU campuses—begin their education in a community college. The CSU, despite its relative selectivity, has always admitted fairly large numbers of underprepared students in order to ensure a student population that reflects the state's diversity. In addition to those students who do not meet regular admission criteria, substantial numbers of regularly admitted students cannot demonstrate college-level skills in the areas of either math or English and are placed in developmental programs.[2] For example, on one urban CSU campus, eight

out of 10 students needed precollege-level English. Overall the CSU spends $10 million (or 0.6% of their total budget) to teach needed English and math skills to underprepared students (Richardson, 1995).

The community colleges, however, as open admission institutions, face a much more daunting task. Community colleges have multiple missions which are sometimes in conflict. Their primary task is to prepare students to transfer to the CSU or UC; however, they also have to prepare students for jobs through vocational programs and to serve students who are enrolled simply to improve themselves and who have neither job training nor transfer goals. They must serve all students, including those with minimal literacy skills in English. Finally, community college faculty work under more difficult conditions than their CSU colleagues—larger class sizes for basic skills classes, a higher proportion of part-time faculty, and fewer resources for the coordination of teachers and curriculum.

The differences in the population, mission, and conditions between the CSU and the community colleges result in community college ESL students who transfer to the CSU with widely differing skill levels. Some are indistinguishable from their peers who began as freshmen in the CSU, but many come underprepared for upper division university-level work. They discover that they lack the proficiency in English to meet upper division writing requirements and—although they may not see this—to truly benefit from the programs the university has to offer.

For these ESL students who are underprepared, the transition between community college and the CSU is often a rocky one. The Master Plan set up a system in which the CSU and community colleges function as separate entities and where most campuses, programs, and even teachers function autonomously, and yet in which student outcomes are somehow expected to be equivalent. This article will explore what happens in the community colleges and the CSU to account for the mismatch between two supposedly equivalent systems of higher education and suggest ways in which the vision of the Master Plan can be brought closer to reality. It will further consider the issue of inconsistency within segments—that is, students taking equivalent courses on different campuses do not necessarily receive comparable instruction or meet comparable standards.

### L2 Assessment in the Community Colleges

At the community college level the many differences among ESL programs begin with the placement processes. Although individual community colleges may have worked out appropriate L2 placement and other assessment practices for their particular institutional context, assessment practices vary throughout the system. Moreover, no attempt is made to match com-

munity college assessment with that in the CSU. It is no wonder that students, who often move between several institutions during their college years, are bewildered, frustrated, and sometimes angry at the mixed messages they receive.

Students attending community colleges are required to be assessed for their English and math skills upon entry. The community college system has mandated that all instruments used in this endeavor be approved by the chancellor's office (State of California, 1993; see Garlow, this volume). Therefore, all tests are rigorously reviewed for their validity, reliability, fairness, and appropriateness to the students and curricula. ESL tests are no exception; they must demonstrate that they are valid, that they are a good match for the course content for which they are to be used, and that they are normed on a population of ESL students similar to that found in the college (California Community Colleges, Chancellor's Office, 1995).

However, only a single standardized test has received full approval status for ESL placement from the community college chancellor's office. The Combined English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA) is a multiple-choice cloze test which focuses on grammar. It does not include a measure of reading readiness, a writing sample, and as yet has no oral/aural component. Some faculty have identified the lack of a writing sample as an impediment to effectively placing students in the upper levels of their programs. The staff of the state chancellor's office in 1990 also regarded the inclusion of a writing sample in ESL placement tests as essential (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 1990). Similarly, they stated that "an oral/aural test is an essential part of a placement battery. The omission of a speaking test may result in the misplacement of students" ( p. 3). The CELSA by itself is not a good match for the diverse ESL offerings throughout the state. To compensate for these difficulties with the CELSA, many colleges have devised their own instruments or adapted other published tests and had those approved for their individual campus use, an endeavor that requires considerable work on the part of the college. However, this local testing results in a lack of standardization and means that the same student might be placed in courses at different levels on different campuses. Since neither placement nor programs are aligned across the state, it is not surprising that students finish their composition programs at very different levels also.

The greatest obstacle to the successful testing and placement of ESL students in the community college system, however, is that there is no mechanism for assuring that ESL students take the carefully scrutinized ESL tests. For a variety of reasons, many students opt to take the test designed for native speakers. Oral fluency, which usually develops much

more quickly than academic reading and writing skills, may lead counselors to think students are more advanced that they really are. Some, not realizing the length of time needed to develop proficiency in a second language, may feel that ESL classes are actually a barrier to student success in the community college; they may also respond sympathetically to students' desires to move through their programs as quickly as possible because of financial and other pressures. The students themselves may be operating on the premise that they have finished ESL in high school or feel a stigma attached to ESL. These students are able to bypass ESL programs altogether and typically end up taking developmental courses designed for native speakers. The instructors of these classes, most of whom are not trained in teaching ESL, may find it difficult to deal with the many second language syntactic and semantic features encountered in students' writing and often do not understand the issues involved in second language acquisition. Later, these students may transfer to CSU or UC having met the English course requirements but without having had second language issues addressed in those courses.

Common exit standards have often been suggested as a solution to students taking inappropriate language classes. Setting those standards is possible, but deciding how to measure whether students have achieved them is not so easy. Unlike the CSU system which mandates the Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR), the community colleges have no exit criteria or assessment. In fact, exit tests, unless they are part of the course grade, are expressly prohibited (State of California, 1993). Some campuses do give a common final examination as part of the final grade in certain courses, and at least one community college has a requirement that students have passing scores on a majority of inclass writing assignments in order to pass ESL writing courses (Sacramento City College, English Department, 1995). Most colleges, however, lack the resources needed to put such a testing process in place, leaving teachers to use their individual criteria in assigning grades. Lack of common exit standards from level to level means that students succeeding in a course taught by one teacher may not have attained skills comparable to students succeeding in what should be a similar course taught by another teacher. The community college system as a whole has not viewed making standards consistent between campuses as a priority (see California Community Colleges' Chancellor's Office, 1990, Appendix C.2).

One step to address the issue of common standards is inherent in the community college requirements for establishing prerequisites. In the same way that community college placement instruments must be proved valid, course prerequisites also have to be shown to be necessary for student suc-

cess. To satisfy this mandate in ESL programs, ESL faculty must collaboratively list the entrance skills required to succeed in ESL 2, for example, and the exit skills expected from students succeeding in the prerequisite course, ESL 1 (State of California, 1993). Once the identification of these skills is established at a nucleus of colleges, standards from campus to campus should become more consistent.

## L2 Assessment in the CSU

### Lower Division

L2 students in the CSU are not identified as ESL during the admission process. Both L1 and L2 students entering the CSU, unless exempt, must take the English Placement Test (EPT). Although the test asks students to indicate if their first language is not English, most campuses do not use this information. Campuses that wish to place students into ESL courses cannot rely solely on EPT results and often must retest L2 students locally. Practices vary widely. Some campuses do not retest and offer the same developmental coursework to all students regardless of language background. Others offer special courses for international students only; yet others offer a series of courses for students who can benefit from specialized ESL instruction parallel to those for native speakers. As in the community colleges, some L2 students resist being classified as ESL, and some English teachers and counselors view ESL courses as unnecessary obstacles and therefore direct students to courses for native speakers.

After students are placed by the EPT, no further systemwide efforts are made to ensure that students complete their freshman composition program with equivalent skills. Some CSU programs achieve a fairly high level of programmatic coherence through "common examinations, common writing projects, structured course sequencing, regular meetings of faculty involved with the program, instructor handbooks keyed to exams, coordination of syllabi and materials and 'holistic' student evaluation by instructors" (California State University, Committee on Education Policy, 1992, p. 10). However, despite these efforts, individual precollege-level courses are not articulated with the corresponding courses among CSU campuses or in the community colleges.

### Upper Division

The ultimate checkpoint for writing skills in the CSU is the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR). Instituted by the trustees to test writing proficiency at the junior level, it is called by different names on different campuses—for example, the Writing Proficiency Exam,

the Graduate Writing Exam, and the Writing Skills Test. A survey conducted by the authors in fall 1995 documents the differences in the implementation of the GWAR among the 23 CSU campuses (see Appendix A). Because each CSU campus determines the means to meet the requirement, proficiency is demonstrated in different ways on different campuses (see Appendix B). On most campuses students satisfy the requirement by taking a test; at some they take a test to place into a course which they must pass; at others they may choose a test or a course. Although all CSU students are held to the GWAR, there is no systemwide consistency in how L2 students meet this requirement.

Different campuses accommodate L2 students in satisfying the GWAR in a variety of ways. Some allow extra time for nonnative speakers (30 minutes to 1-1/2 hours more). At one campus international students returning to their home country can pass with a lower score (10 instead of 14 out of a possible 24 points). At some campuses some accommodation occurs in the grading session; this may be done by informal means (as one coordinator said, ". . .there tends to be more leeway given for mechanical errors/mistakes in the writings of nonnative speakers" (personal communication, 1995). Often campuses ask ESL students to self-identify so that "readers are aware of this when evaluating and scoring the exam," as another coordinator noted (personal communication, 1995). At other readings ESL papers are read separately by ESL instructors.

Despite these accommodations, ESL students in institutions which keep statistics (about half the group) fail the GWAR in much larger numbers than native speakers (see Table 1).

**Table 1**
**CSU GWAR Pass Rates**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| CSU 1 | Overall .....70% | ESL .....40% |
| CSU 2 | Non-ESL .....85% | ESL .....60% |
| CSU 3 | Native Speakers ....75% | Nonnative speakers ..50% |
| CSU 4 | Overall .....81% | ESL .....52% |
| CSU 5 | Non-ESL .....70% | ESL .....50% |

Although ESL students are clearly having a problem fulfilling the GWAR, the extent of the problem is difficult to document precisely because campuses do not identify L2 students or collect data about them in a consistent way.

Are students' problems compounded by the lack of coordination between courses they have taken (or avoided) along the way? Most coordinators say the perception among their faculty is that community college course articulation is a problem, but very few have any concrete data on the issue. In a survey conducted at one campus at each exam administration, however, students who report that they took their freshman composition class (English 1A) at a community college generally fail at a somewhat higher rate than students who reported taking that class at a CSU, UC, or private university (California State University, Sacramento, English Department, 1995).

Whatever their route, L2 students have difficulty meeting the GWAR at the CSU (Asian Pacific American Advisory Committee, 1994). Individual campus coordinators and faculty must struggle with ways to give L2 students the skills they need to satisfy this requirement at this late date in their academic life, but the entire ESL teaching community needs to look at long-term solutions that will enable students to be better prepared before they encounter this checkpoint just before graduation.

### Issues of Reclassification

A complication that exists not only at the time students take the GWAR but throughout their educational career is that L2 students are not identified in any consistent way, resulting in students moving back and forth between ESL and native speaker classes as they progress through the high school, community college, and university systems. Often L2 students, who may have begun their K–12 education classified as limited English proficient (LEP), have been reclassified as fluent English proficient (FEP) by the time they graduate from high school. However, these students may still lack sufficient academic English to succeed at the college level and still have ESL features in their writing (see Scarcella, this volume). Therefore, they may be advised or required to enroll in ESL classes. After completing an ESL program and subsequent native speaker English classes through English 1A at the community college, a student may enroll in a CSU and again be advised to take ESL classes in preparation for the GWAR.

Another group of students who may undergo reclassification are the English-dominant bilingual students. These students have much in common with native speakers of English: They have lived in the U.S. for most of their lives, had most of their education in American schools, have oral fluency in English, and use English much of the time. Yet, like ESL students, these students often need instruction in academic literacy and have features in their writing such as dropped inflectional endings, preposition errors, and word choice problems. Although these students are often rightly

placed in classes with native speakers, their needs may be best understood by teachers with training in L2 acquisition and linguistics. Often neither these students nor their advisors and instructors have a clear idea of where they will best be served. Most begin in classes for native speakers (NSs), since they usually do not regard themselves as ESL; but they may later move to ESL classes because teachers of native speakers are unsure how to deal with the residual ESL features in their writing or because they have problems with institutionally administered timed writing exams, where less accommodation may be made for them than in course-related writing.

**Expectations for English Development in the CCC and CSU**

Contributing to the problem of producing academically literate L2 students is the common misconception of how long it takes to acquire English. Immigrants may need only two or three years to become proficient in social uses of English, but academic proficiency takes much longer. A large-scale study of high school students has shown that the most advantaged L2 students require five to seven years to reach the 50th normal curve equivalent (NCE) on standardized tests such as the California Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) when they are in the best instructional programs; those with no schooling in their L1 on the average take 7 to 10 years to reach parity with their NS peers (Collier, 1989).

Collier's study has many implications for L2 students in community colleges and CSUs. Unlike the students in the study, many L2 students in California colleges and universities come from working class immigrant families and may not be literate in their first language. In addition, many schools have been overwhelmed by the recent influx of immigrant students—nearly one in four California students, more than 1.25 million, is designated LEP (Maganini, 1995)—and many others, though not officially LEP, still are strongly affected by their L1. These students are often surrounded by peers who are English learners themselves, so they acquire a nonstandard form of English, what has been called ESL as an L2 (Marshall, 1995; see Scarcella, this volume), rather than standard English. Finally, the standard used to measure parity in the Collier (1989) study is a high school standard; the standard for college or university level work is higher and, therefore, will likely take even longer to achieve. Academic proficiency is a moving target since the demands are progressively higher at each level (Marshall, personal communication, 1995). Thus, few L2 students in the California community colleges and CSUs will achieve anything close to educated native-speaker proficiency in reading and writing before finishing their lower division work or even before graduating from a four-year university.

Despite the research that confirms the lengthy process required for L2 students to acquire English, most faculty and others who work with L2 students assume that when students have finished ESL coursework, they will be virtually indistinguishable from their native-speaking peers. At the point at which they are mainstreamed into English courses for native speakers, however, their teachers are often perplexed about what to do with them since their ability to generate and organize ideas, to incorporate the text of others in their writing, and to control grammar and semantics all differ from their classmates' abilities in significant ways (Silva, 1993).

Teachers of content courses are also often puzzled by L2 students in their classes. L2 students in both the community colleges and CSU typically do not wait to finish ESL or developmental English courses before enrolling in general education courses; instead, the assumption is that they can and must take GE courses and even courses in their major while they are completing their ESL or developmental English coursework. Once students begin their studies, financial aid requirements pressure them to take courses for which they may not have the language skills; moreover, the instructors of these courses typically consider language instruction to be outside their responsibility and expertise.

L2 students are sometimes unsuccessful in courses for which they lack adequate English skills, but all too often they are successful when they should not be. Faculty, confronted with a large group of L2 students who cannot write at a college level, may eliminate writing and resort to multiple choice tests. If writing is required, they may encourage students, either overtly or more subtly, to get "help" by having someone else edit their writing or even do it for them. Counselors may contribute to the problem by underestimating the language demands of courses and encouraging students to take courses that should wait until their language skills are stronger.

### Implications of the Lack of Consistency Between the CCC and the CSU

The current system of laissez-faire, whereby every institution determines its own standards, results, not surprisingly, in a lack of equivalence both within and across the community college and CSU systems. An L2 student graduating from one community college or CSU may have an entirely different level of English proficiency than a student graduating from another or even the same institution. It is not safe to make generalizations about students' proficiency levels based on the fact that they have satisfactorily completed the transfer composition course in a California community college; and it is only slightly safer to make this generalization for a student completing freshman composition in a CSU. Data collected at one

CSU campus where all incoming L2 students from freshman through graduate levels are tested suggests that upper division students, most of whom transfer from California community colleges, are better prepared than entering lower division students, most of whom come from California high schools. However, completion of freshman composition or the ESL equivalent at either a community college or CSU does not ensure that students will be prepared for university level work, according to that campus's definition (see Table 2). This lack of preparation is of more than theoretical interest since these underprepared upper division ESL students will need to demonstrate writing proficiency in order to satisfy the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR).

**Table 2**
**ESL Student Placement, Fall 1995**

| *Level* | *Freshmen* | *n* | *Transfers* | *n* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| College level (advanced ESL) | 5% | 6 | 9% | 12 |
| One semester below (high intermediate) | 31% | 36 | 43% | 59 |
| Two semesters below (intermediate) | 58% | 67 | 46% | 63 |
| Three semesters below (high beginning) | 5% | 6 | 2% | 3 |

*Note*: The data in Table 2 are from the English Diagnostic Test Report, CSU, Sacramento, (fall, 1995). Freshmen students come primarily from California high schools; transfer students come mostly from California community colleges (see Appendix C for sample essays at each level).

### Calls for Improved Articulation

At this time neither the community colleges nor the CSU has attempted to document success rates of L2 students. Most research has instead focused on success rates based on ethnicity, which often does not correspond to the L1. Administrators in the California community colleges chancellor's office and the California Department of Education, who were contacted for information about studies on ESL student success, agreed

that such studies would be beneficial. One of the recommendations of the CSU Workgroup on Underprepared Students (endorsed by the CSU trustees' Committee on Educational Policy, 1996, in its final report on remediation entitled *Precollegiate Skills Instruction*) is that "CSU campuses should identify prior to placement in CSU English courses those students whose first language is not English and whose major skill needs are developmental in nature." (Attachment A.; see also Asian Pacific American Advisory Committee, 1994, p. 10; and California State University, Office of the Chancellor, 1988, p. 8) If this policy is implemented, it will mean that for the first time L2 students will be identified and data can be collected to document their progress through the university.

Ideally, community college standards for freshman composition or its ESL equivalent would be consistent and would mesh with the standards in the 23 CSUs. However, in the CSUs no attempts have been made to articulate those criteria with the community colleges except through a few localized efforts, which have been limited by lack of ongoing funding (see Ediger, Flachmann & Pluta, and Murray, this volume). It is not uncommon for students to place two semesters below freshman English on the English Placement Test yet be able to go directly into freshman English on a community college campus. The CSU trustees have recently indicated a greater commitment to resolving such differences. They state that their recommendations in *Precollegiate Skills Instruction* "represent a commitment to working with our partners in elementary and secondary education and with the California Community Colleges and other segments of higher education in an all-out effort to strengthen education by creating an interconnected framework of common and well understood goals, expectations, and standards" (California State University, Committee on Educational Policy, 1996, p. 5).

### Recommendations for Achieving More Consistent Standards

Although the CSU trustees' original proposal in fall 1995 to end remediation in the CSU seemed to be closing the doors of the four-year university system to many second language students, the final policy (California State University, Committee on Educational Policy, 1996) is a strong call for better communication among the segments of California education. Communication and subsequent collaboration can remedy the situation that now exists wherein the community colleges and CSU, as systems, campuses, and programs, function independently of one another.

A variety of groups have addressed the lack of adequate articulation among segments and its effects on ESL students. A report to the Intersegmental Coordinating Council (Intersegmental Coordinating

Council, Curriculum and Assessment Cluster Committee, 1989)) noted a lack of intersegmental competency standards and recommended the development of a statement of language competencies and performance levels for NNSs of English and the articulation of ESL tests. Likewise, in October 1991 the ESL Conference on Building Better Bridges for ESL Students addressed curriculum standards, matriculation, and assessment of ESL students across the community college, CSU and University of California systems. The common outcome, however, has been a lack of ongoing funding to implement the generally sound recommendations which these groups have repeatedly made. Some local projects have been funded with short term grants while other efforts have been carried out without funding, simply through the goodwill of the instructors on the various campuses. The recognition that the preparation of second language students must be an intersegmental effort needs to be accompanied by ongoing intersegmental support. Without that support the needed communication between segments simply will not happen.

Improved communication will ensure that everyone involved with L2 instruction has a clear idea of the standards expected for college-level work. Outreach by college ESL instructors, perhaps in the form of joint in-service discussions between high school, community college, and CSU faculty, could lead to a clearer understanding of the need for student preparation and possibly to the establishment of more academic ESL courses in the high schools. Better articulation between the community colleges and the CSU is also needed. Possible ways to achieve this might include joint curriculum development, shared assignments leading to joint grading sessions, and the inclusion of community college instructors in EPT and GWAR assessment. Innovative programs modeled on the Bay Area Writing Project could help bring theory and practice together and result in substantive changes in curriculum at all levels. An intersegmental perspective could encourage counselors and other student service personnel to recognize the role of ESL instruction in their students' overall progression from the CCC to the CSU.

Adequate funding is also needed so that assessment can become an intersegmental effort. The development of a set of descriptors to describe the language proficiencies of L2 students across high school, community colleges, CSUs and UCs (see Browning, this volume) is an important beginning. However, funding must be found so that the descriptors can be validated, attached to language samples, and used to develop intersegmental assessment tools. Common measurements and common language to describe the outcome of the measurements will go a long way toward ensuring that students are prepared at one level to move on to the next and that

expectations for language development at each level are realistic given what is known about second language acquisition. A final step is to provide funding to collect data and develop intersegmental tools so that the data are comparable.

The lack of coherence of curriculum and standards between the community colleges and the CSU that currently exists is misleading to students and results in wasteful duplication of effort. The task of educating our second language students is so important, long, and labor-intensive, that we can no longer afford that wastefulness. Articulation, in the sense of both communication and collaboration, is essential at this time in California's educational history. ■

**Endnotes**

1. Students' rank is based on a combination of their high school grade point average and their scores on either the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or the American College Test (ACT).

2. This article uses the term developmental to refer to precollege-level ESL courses even though the CSU system categorizes these courses as remedial. See the (1994) *CATESOL Position Statement on the Differences Between English as a Second Language and Basic Skills Instruction at Postsecondary Levels.*. (Available from CATESOL, 1146 N. Central Avenue, #195, Glendale, CA 91202.)

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## Appendix A

### Questionnaire
### GWAR for ESL Students in the CSU

1. Name and address of school:

2. Person responding to questionnaire:

   Position: E-mail:

   Phone: Fax:

---

1. How is the GWAR fulfilled on your campus?

   test: _____ test to place into course: _____

   course: _____ course followed by test: _____

2. Which of your requirements may be repeated? How many times?

3. What are the provisions for counseling?

4. What are the provisions for appeals?

5. Are ESL students identified on your campus? If so, how?

6. How do ESL students on your campus satisfy the GWAR? Is there any difference from requirements for native speakers? Please describe.

7. If students on your campus take courses to prepare for the GWAR, please answer the following questions:

   How many courses are required? How many units are they?

   What are the department and the hegis code of the courses?

8. If students on your campus take courses to satisfy the GWAR, please answer the following questions:

   How many courses are required? How many units are they?

   What are the department and the hegis code of the courses?

9. Is the GWAR a barrier to graduation for many of your ESL students? Do ESL students have to repeat the test or course (indicate which) more times than native speakers?

10. Do you keep statistics on the pass rate for ESL students vs. native speakers? If so, please include recent information.

11. Is there a difference in the success rates on the GWAR of ESL community college transfer students compared with ESL students who began as freshmen on your campus?

12. Are there problems with articulation of standards for ESL students between the community colleges and your campus?

## Appendix B
## ESL Student Graduation Writing Requirements at CSU Campuses

| *California State University Campus* | *How GWAR Is Fulfilled* | *GWAR Accommodations for ESL Students* |
|---|---|---|
| Bakersfield | Exam and course | None |
| Chico | Exam and course | ESL tests read by trained ESL faculty |
| Dominguez Hills | Exam and course | Extra time |
| Fresno | Exam or course | None |
| Fullerton | Exam, course option after 2 failures | None |
| Hayward | Exam | None |
| Humboldt | Exam | Lower score for visa students returning to home country |
| Long Beach | Exam | None |
| Los Angeles | Exam, course option after 1 failure | Double time, read by selected readers |
| Maritime | Exam and course | None |
| Monterey | Data not available | |
| Northridge | Exam | Read separately by trained ESL readers |
| Pomona | Exam | None |
| Sacramento | Exam | Extra time, read by trained ESL readers |
| San Bernardino | Course | None |
| San Diego | Exam or course | Special course for L2 |
| San Francisco | Exam | Special course for L2 |
| San Jose | Exam | None |
| San Luis Obispo | Exam or course | Extra time, read by trained ESL readers |
| San Marcos | GWAR satisfied by upper division course | None |
| Sonoma | Exam | None |
| Stanislaus | Course | None |

## Appendix C
## Sample Student Placement Essays

### College Level (Advanced ESL)

There is no question about the fact that honesty and loyalty are good qualities to have. However, when trying to choose one over the other, people look to themselves and based on their culture, religion, traditions and moral beliefs, arrive at a conclusion that will sound fair and just to them. However their conclusions are a matter of their personal opinions that reflect their cultures and lives.

Honesty isn't always a good approach in particular situations. If we look at the hypothetical example of a three year old girl looking out the window waiting for her dad to come home on a rainy evening. If her dad died in a car accident, how would you be honest to a three year old who doesn't even know the meaning of death?

On the other hand, loyalty isn't always good either. Just look at World War II and at Hitler's army that was loyal to the end only to commit one of the most gruesome acts of geniside in the history of man. The soldiers blind foldedly followed the commands of their leaders and didn't even realize the damage they were doing to themselves and others.

To arrive at my point, I want to say that my cultural and traditional background advocates loyalty in friendship. It is a widely accepted fact in my culture that loyalty in friendship is the most important jewel. In friendship, loyalty comes first, but honesty among friends is also a strong factor. But that doesn't entirely answer my question. The kind of problems and the kind of circumstances that might surround a situation must be the final factor to be taken into account when making a judgment.

### One Semester Below College Level (High Intermediate ESL)

*Honesty Vs. Loyalty*

"Honesty is the best policy," when I am searching for a true friend, honesty would be the first characteric I look for. By this reason, I believe honesty is more important in a friendship, honesty can also serve as part of loyalty.

I am a person, who regard friendship highly, so therefore honesty had serve as an guiding light toward many of my decesions, when it came to choosing between the right and wrong doing of my friend. An example of my decesion between loyalty and honesty was demonstrated in my junior year. One of my close friend cheated on the midterm. At the beginning, I acted as nothing had happen, but as time goes by, I need to speak to some-

one in order to retrieve harmony. I spoke to another close friendship, but she doesn't see my point or concern. At the end, I spoke to the friend that had cheated on the midterm, she expressed regret. So we both went and told the teacher. By this experience, our friendship had reach a higher understanding. Upon a conversation, she had told me that she was glad, that I told her about how I felt about dishonest people. Honesty had not only serve as a steping stone to our friendship but also as a tool to loyalty. By being honest about how I felt, I had done my duty as a friend and that meant loyalty to me. Till today, I still believe that honesty is the best policy.

**Two Semesters Below College Level (Intermediate ESL)**

Being honesty and loyalty is very difficult when someone find out his or her best friend cheating in school. In the view of loyalty to friends, people should be in their friends' side and protect their friends from hurt. Also, the definition of friend is caring, sharing, and protecting each other. Moreover, the most important point for being friends is honesty. Honesty is the significant requirement for true friendship. When someone finds out his or her friend was cheating in school, he or she should not act like see no evil, hear no evil. If the person doing so, he or she is not a good friend for that cheating person. The person should tell his or her friend (cheating one) what he or she did in school is wrong. Also, the friend of the cheating person should be a honesty studend too. He or she should tell the true to their teacher after he or she gives a lesson to the cheating one.

Loyalty to friends should be wisely, honestly, and legally. They should not let their friend falling into unethic ma..ers or actions. If a good friend do nothing when he or she knows his or her friend cheating in school, he or she act like an devil evil who pulls his or her friend out of the cliff. The cheating person will never find out the true friendship is and he or she never knows what his or her fault is.

**Three Semesters Below College Level (High Beginning ESL)**

I will be surprised because I know my friend very will, and we talk about all the time is school to have good knowldge and understanding very well what we take the class. Not only pass the class with out understanding the material what we learn. Because of this I know her. But if she is cheating I will be disoppaited. But I will take her that she is not wright what she is doing. Cheating is gambling and distroyed people life.

The CATESOL Journal

JANET LANE
*University of California, Davis*
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*University of California, Los Angeles*
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*University of California, Berkeley*

# ESL Students Entering the University of California

The English as a second language (ESL) population attending the University of California (UC) comprises a wide variety of ethnicities and first language backgrounds. Undergraduate ESL students tend to be largely immigrants (permanent residents or citizens), with the majority having completed high school (and many middle school) in California.[1] ESL students who gain admission to UC immediately after high school are academically among the top one eighth of students graduating from high school. They are motivated, bright students who are generally determined to succeed academically. The same statements hold true for the majority of ESL transfer students, with the qualification that most of these students did not place among the upper one eighth of graduating high school students and therefore would not have gained acceptance to a UC campus at that stage of their educational career. Even more than their first-year counterparts, transfer students tend to be first-generation college students and may also come from slightly more disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. The number of ESL students making their way to UC is increasing, thereby challenging the University to examine intersegmental agreements and practices affecting these students.

## Identification of Students as ESL

Students are identified as ESL by their respective campuses. In general, the UC systemwide Subject A Examination serves as the primary means of identification. This exam is required of all entering freshmen who have not satisfied the University Subject A Requirement through coursework or test scores prior to admission. When students are identified by this exam as

potentially in need of ESL instruction,[2] the individual campuses to which they have been accepted make decisions about their placement. On most campuses, they are screened further. This screening takes various forms—most often a reanalysis of the Subject A composition, a review of biographical information provided in the student's application for admission[3], and/or consideration of the results of further diagnostic instruments.[4]

In contrast, transfer students enter the UC system having already satisfied their freshman composition requirement. Thus, campuses do not identify students from this group as ESL or hold students to a requirement. The one notable exception is the UCLA campus, where transfer students can, in fact, be tested and held for ESL courses.

### Articulation Agreements

Articulation agreements among the three postsecondary segments of education—California Community Colleges (CCC), California State University (CSU), and University of California (UC)—govern the courses which a student must have completed before being admitted to the next higher education segment. They also govern which courses taken at one institution are granted course equivalency at another. As outlined in Celce-Murcia and Schwabe (this volume), in the UC system the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) establishes articulation policies between UC, high schools, and two- or four-year transfer institutions. ESL students are governed by the same articulation agreements as all other students.

High school students, including ESL students, must meet the *a-f* requirements of the existing articulation agreement between the high school and the UC system (see Appendix A) in order to be UC eligible. The *b* requirement (English) demands that students complete four years of college preparatory high school English instruction, one year of which may be an advanced ESL course.[5] An additional year of advanced ESL can be counted toward the *f* requirement (college preparatory electives).[6]

Transfer student admission is governed by a similar set of articulation requirements. To be UC eligible, transfer students must present a certain grade point average in CC courses which have been articulated as UC transferable. Students are encouraged to complete courses required for their intended major at UC and also to take courses to satisfy general education (GE) requirements. To satisfy the latter, students may complete the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) (see Appendix B). Unlike the *a-f* requirements, the IGETC is not an admission requirement, but rather a recommendation. However, students are wise to complete these requirements because doing so improves their chances for

admission. Beginning with students entering UC in fall 1998, transfer students also will be required to complete a specified course pattern, including two transferable courses in English composition, in order to be eligible for admission. These new course requirements were instituted by BOARS to strengthen the level of overall preparation of transfer students, and in particular their academic literacy and mathematical skills. Thus, by 1998, virtually all transfer students entering the UC system will have already satisfied the freshman composition requirement.

One repercussion of the articulation agreements for ESL students, both incoming first-year students and transfer students, is that in order to complete the requisite courses for UC admission as well as any additional ESL coursework the student might be required to take by the high school or community college, ESL students may require slightly longer than their native English-speaking (NS) peers. For high school graduates, the provision that an advanced ESL course taken in high school can now count toward the *f* elective requirement is a very positive step toward assisting students in developing strong language skills. At present, there is no parallel provision for such an advanced-level ESL course at the CC to count toward a student's fulfilling transfer requirements.

### Academic Preparedness: Expectations Versus Reality

Given that the UC system accepts as freshmen only the top one eighth of the state's high school graduates (see Ching, Ford, & McKee, this volume) and that as part of their *a-f* requirements these students have completed four college preparatory English courses, one would expect that students entering the system would have attained a high degree of academic literacy skills. Similarly, one would expect that transfer students who enter the system already having completed one course beyond freshman composition would have literacy skills allowing them to function at a high level of academic performance. This "best of all worlds" scenario, unfortunately, does not hold true.

As documented elsewhere in this volume, there are clear reasons for the discrepancy between the expectation of academic readiness and the reality of vast numbers of underprepared students (both first-year and transfer) entering the system. Not the least of these reasons is the increased cognitive and linguistic demands as students move from segment to segment in the educational system. The problem of underpreparedness is compounded by numerous other factors in the high school and CC systems, such as the lack of proper assessment measures to guide the placement of students into ESL classes, the inappropriate tracking and counseling of ESL students into developmental English courses taught by instructors

who are not trained to work with ESL students, premature mainstreaming of ESL students, and the lack of consistent grading standards and criteria for passing students from one course to another. Finally, ESL students (even when identified by the institution as needing ESL instruction) may opt to circumvent ESL courses and enroll directly into transfer-credit English courses because of limitations on community colleges' ability to mandate prerequisites.

**Entering First-Year Students**

The linguistic preparedness and academic readiness of entering first-year undergraduates varies somewhat from campus to campus, with Berkeley and UCLA attracting a larger percentage of the most qualified applicants. For example, in 1987, the first year the Subject A Examination was administered statewide, the mean score on the verbal section of the SAT for students admitted to Berkeley and UCLA was 498. The mean score for students entering Riverside and Irvine was 451; not unexpectedly, these two campuses had the highest percentage of students who took the Subject A Exam and were designated *E* (for ESL) - 10.01% and 15.07% respectively (see Scarcella, this volume, for additional discussion of Irvine's ESL population).

ESL course offerings for entering first-year students vary depending on the UC campus students attend. On some campuses, students may be held for one or more ESL courses (credit-bearing on all but two campuses) prior to completing freshman composition. At UC Davis, for example, entering freshmen can be held for one, two, or three quarters in an ESL composition course series before taking the Subject A-level course and then freshman composition. On the other hand, two campuses (Berkeley and Santa Cruz) do not require ESL courses.

**Transfer Students**

Transfer students exhibit certain characteristics which differentiate them from the entering first-year ESL students and which can place them further at academic risk. This population of ESL students appears to be a growing one. Figure 1, drawn from statistics compiled at UCLA , compares the undergraduate student population in two academic years. In 1990-91, 37.8% of the undergraduate ESL population were transfer students. Only four years later, in 1994-95, this percentage had increased to 46.8%.

**Figure 1**
**The Undergraduate ESL Student Population at UCLA (1990-91 vs. 1994-95)**

| *Population* | *1990-91* % | *n* |
|---|---|---|
| Freshmen entering from U.S. secondary schools | 55.4 | 268 |
| Transfer students | 37.8 | 183 |
| International (F-1 visa) students | 6.8 | 33 |
| **TOTAL** | **100** | **484** |

| *Population* | *1994-95* % | *n* |
|---|---|---|
| Freshmen entering from U.S. secondary schools | 38.5 | 129 |
| Transfer students | 46.8 | 157 |
| International (F-1 visa) students | 14.0 | 47 |
| **TOTAL** | **99.3** | **335** |

*Note.* Total percentages do not equal 100% due to rounding.

This trend toward a larger transfer population at UCLA (and UC in general) may be explained by economic factors, which can prevent many immigrant students from enrolling in a four-year institution initially. It may also be attributed to increased and improved articulation over the years between UC and the transfer institutions, which has greatly facilitated the transfer process. This increase in the percentage of transfer students highlights the importance of continuing and expanding effective articulation among the segments.

The language proficiency of these transfer students is an additional consideration. Figure 2, displaying data from the UCLA English as a

Second Language Placement Examination (ESLPE), shows that, although some transfer students place out of ESL upon testing, many still place into an ESL course. In fact, a larger percentage of transfer students than of entering freshmen places into the three lowest levels of a four-course ESL sequence, and some even place into a preuniversity ESL course. This fact is especially of concern because all these transfer students have satisfied freshman composition through the CC, and many have even taken one course beyond freshman composition in order to fulfill the IGETC guidelines. Thus, while these transfer students should be more prepared than the entering freshmen because they have satisfied freshman composition, this is clearly not the case for a significant number of students.

**Figure 2**
**The ESL Placement Examination Results of Transfer Students vs. Freshmen Entering From a U.S. Secondary School From 1991 to 1995**

| *ESL Course Placement* | *Transfer Students* | | *Entering Freshmen* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *%* | *n* | *%* | *n* |
| Preuniversity ESL (noncredit) | 1.6 | 12 | 0.7 | 3 |
| Low intermediate ESL | 5.2 | 39 | 2.4 | 10 |
| Intermediate ESL | 15.2 | 115 | 10.0 | 41 |
| AdvancedESL | 22.3 | 168 | 36.2 | 148 |
| ESL composition | 17.1 | 129 | 34.7 | 142 |
| Exempt | 38.5 | 291 | 15.8 | 65 |
| **TOTAL** | **99.9** | **754** | **99.8** | **409** |

*Note:* Total percentages do not equal 100% due to the rounding off of decimals.

UCLA, which tests any entering nonnative-speaking (NNS) transfer students who did not receive a grade of *B* or better in the two transfer English courses, is currently finding that many ESL transfer students—even those who have completed two transfer-credit composition courses at the CC—still have a significant need for additional ESL instruction. Increasing numbers of these students are even placing into a pre-university level of ESL and demonstrate a critical need for additional ESL and developmental composition courses. Appendices C–E consist of writing samples from students representing this transfer population. Such lack of prepara-

tion in academic English skills significantly impedes students' ability to graduate in the expected two-year timeline; additionally, it places them at higher risk of being placed on subject-to-dismissal status or of being dismissed from the university.

No other UC campus tests the English language skills of entering ESL transfer students.[6] However, there is growing concern about the language proficiency of these students who enter UC from community colleges. Clearly there is a need for ESL instruction for this growing number of ESL transfer students. In fact, some campuses are currently taking initial steps to develop courses to meet the linguistic needs of these students.

## Additional Issues

There remain a number of additional issues which affect ESL students as they transition from other educational segments into UC. These include the early mainstreaming of ESL students, the use of SAT screening leading to conditional admission of ESL applicants, the underuse of bridge programs by ESL students, and the outsourcing of Subject A to other segments.

### Early Mainstreaming of ESL Students

Many ESL students who come directly from high school to UC are surprised when they are identified at UC as ESL. These students have often received above-average grades in high school classes; they may have never been told that their writing exhibits ESL errors. Early mainstreaming of ESL students, that is, their enrollment in classes with native speakers, occurs in high schools for a number of reasons (see Sasser, this volume). At some high schools, ESL courses are not offered. But even when ESL instruction is available, nonnative speakers who have been in this country for more than three years are usually not eligible to take it even if they need it. For those who are eligible, it is not uncommon for the parents of college-bound ESL students to request that their children be excused from ESL, perhaps mistakenly thinking that an ESL course on their children's transcripts may make them less competitive for UC admission. In interviews conducted with ESL students at UC Irvine (Earle-Carlin & Scarcella, 1993) students reported that they desire to complete ESL courses as quickly as possible or even sometimes avoid them altogether in order to meet the college preparatory English requirement.

Early mainstreaming of ESL students also occurs within the UC system. ESL transfer students have already met English requirements that exempt them from ESL work. The result of this situation is that many transfer students never get ESL assistance even if they exhibit ESL features

in their writing that would have placed them in an ESL class were they entering freshmen.

Recently, a similar problem has begun occurring at the freshman level. ESL students can fulfill the Subject A requirement at a community college during the summer before starting their UC studies. Many students have realized that by satisfying Subject A at a community college, they can bypass a number of ESL courses and Subject A at UC. In other words, by completing one CC course in the summer, an ESL student can arrive at UC in the fall eligible for or having satisfied freshman composition. Although taking a summer writing course can certainly be very helpful, these students are usually not able in such a short time to bring their writing skills up to the level expected for freshman composition and successful work at UC.

**SAT Screening and Conditional UC Admission**

With an increasing number of applicants and diminishing resources to serve them, the University is looking for ways to identify students who require substantial faculty resources and are at high risk not to graduate. Recently on some UC campuses, SAT scores of entering freshmen who qualify for UC admission are being looked at as a possible way of identifying high-risk students. Although this screening must be applied to all students, the result of this particular screening has affected ESL students almost exclusively. At least two campuses (San Diego[10] and Davis[11]) have attempted to offer students identified as high-risk a conditional or deferred admission with the requirement that they complete prescribed CC coursework before entering UC. The assumption here is that these students would return to UC with higher level skills.

The implementation of this new screening process is of concern for several reasons. First, it is not clear that this screening can, in fact, accurately predict which students will succeed and which will fail. Based on 1994–95 student data gathered by the ESL program at UC Davis, at least 50% of the ESL students who might have been identified as high risk based on the SAT screening scores were, in fact, making perfectly normal progress in their English composition courses. Furthermore, we cannot assume that students who have completed CC English courses, even with high grades, will necessarily have strong enough English skills for successful UC work. Thus, while we agree that some students may be better off at other educational institutions, it is exclusionary to apply an additional screening to students who meet UC's requirements for eligibility. Rather than try to predict a student's chance for academic success, UC should provide the needed linguistic instruction that its eligible students need.

**Underuse of Bridge Programs by ESL Students**

All the UC campuses offer special summer bridge programs. These programs are designed to help students prepare not only for campus life but also for academics and usually consist of academic coursework (often math and English), study skills development, and advising. Many of these programs offer special sections for ESL students in the language development/writing segment of the program. Although there is often only a small number of ESL students in these programs, those who do attend benefit greatly from the introduction to UC coursework in a small classroom situation, from individual feedback on their language skills, and from the advising services offered. Most importantly, ESL students who attend get an idea early on of UC expectations for English language use and, at the same time, receive some early feedback on their own English skills. Although invitations are extended to all students who qualify for these programs, more aggressive recruitment of ESL students would be worthwhile so that more could take advantage of the programs' benefits.

**Outsourcing of Subject A to Other Segments**

On two UC campuses (Davis and San Diego), courses which satisfy the Subject A Requirement and which were previously taught by UC faculty have been "outsourced" so that they are now being taught to UC students by a local community college. Students receive UC workload credit for this CC course while at the same time doing their other UC studies.

The outsourcing of Subject A presents a number of problems for ESL students. First, because ESL courses, when needed, are taken prior to Subject A, ESL students start their composition work on the UC campus. There they are working with UC faculty, UC writing tasks, and UC grading standards. Because of the outsourcing, they then have to shift to a CC class for Subject A before continuing on to freshman composition at UC. This jump to a CC Subject A equivalent class midstream in their composition sequence has proven difficult for ESL students not only because of the difference in grading standards[12] and curriculum but also because they are often moving to a class where there is little support for ESL writers. In the community college Subject A equivalent classes taught for UC Davis, for example, many instructors are part-time and are not required to hold office hours. This fact along with the larger class sizes means that ESL students get very little individualized attention. Also, instructor qualifications have proven to be inconsistent. Even sections specifically designated ESL/EOP sometimes have to be staffed by instructors with little or no ESL experience or training. One of the biggest problems at UC Davis with this arrangement is ESL students' inability to pass the Subject A exam despite having

successfully passed the CC Subject A class. They must then repeat the CC course and retake the exam. If they fail the exam yet again, they go through a portfolio review process to determine if their writing exhibits readiness for freshman composition. The majority of students who submit portfolios, most of whom are ESL writers, pass this review and go on to freshman composition even though they have been unable to pass the Subject A Examination.

Outsourcing seems to work against ESL writers, causing them great anxiety and frustration as well as delays in the completion of their UC composition requirement. The consequences of these delays are compounded by the fact that students cannot take any of their GE (general education) requirements until they have completed the Subject A Requirement.

## Conclusion

The increasing number of ESL students in California challenges UC to sharpen its approach to articulation issues. Admittedly, there is strong internal pressure within each segment of California's educational system to mainstream ESL students quickly in order to expedite their progress. In part, this pressure stems from state and local accountability models that view student completion rates as a measure of the system's success. Unfortunately, as a result of this pressure, many students exit a segment without sufficient linguistic proficiency to access the academic resources at the next higher segment effectively. Consequently, UC receives students who have not necessarily had the time or instruction needed to master academic language skills. UC must meet its obligation to these students by offering the language support they need to be successful students at the University.

Rather than viewing and treating ESL students as a liability, UC must see them as an asset bringing linguistic and cultural diversity to the state. In order to improve its practices, UC can look to its ESL faculty for guidance and support the involvement of ESL faculty in articulation efforts both within the UC system itself and among the segments of California's educational system. It can draw on its mandate as the state's research institution to support institutional research and develop sound approaches to identifying and educating ESL students, thereby contributing to a linguistically proficient student population. These students, after all, can form a multilingual, educated workforce, helping California function more effectively in the global marketplace, as long as they are proficient in English. ■

**Endnotes**

1. Some ESL students, especially at the graduate level, are international (F-1 or J-1 visa status) students who apply from overseas either to complete studies or to pursue a nondegree objective (e.g., in the university's Education Abroad program). Due to the focus of this volume on articulation between educational segments in the state of California, this group will not be dealt with in this article.

2. Trained ESL raters examine any Subject A essay which has been identified as "ESL" on its first read and reread the essay to confirm this identification. See Celce-Murcia and Schwabe, this volume, for further discussion.

3. This information includes factors such as home language, length of residence in the U.S., language of primary and secondary schooling, and so on.

4. On some campuses, even if a student is not identified by the Subject A Examination as ESL, admission factors such as citizenship status and SAT scores can be looked at to determine if the Subject A essay should be reread for possible ESL placement.

5. ESL courses may be acceptable for a maximum of one year (two semesters) of high school English provided they are advanced college preparatory ESL courses, with strong emphasis on reading and writing. Such courses must deal specifically with rhetorical, grammatical, and syntactic forms in English—especially those which show cross-linguistic influence—and must provide explicit work in vocabulary development (University of California, Office of the President, Student Academic Services, 1995, p. C-3).

6. An advanced-level English as a second language (ESL) course may be acceptable provided it meets the standards outlined under the *b* requirement (University of California, Office of the President, Student Academic Services, 1995, p. C-3).

7. When students place into this preuniversity ESL course, their admission is deferred until they are able to demonstrate that they can perform work at the low-intermediate level.

8. This statement is supported by data provided by UCLA's Letters and Science counseling division.

9. Some colleges at UC Davis require an upper division advanced composition course. If upper division students do not pass the English composition exam, they must take this course if their college requires it. Special ESL sections of this course are not offered.

10. In fall '95 and '96, any student applying for admission to UCSD with a GPA lower than 3.5 and an SAT verbal of less than 480 was provisionally admitted and required to take one CC English class during the summer and pass it with a grade of *C* or better before starting UC studies in the fall.

11. Beginning in fall '96, students applying to UC Davis with both an SAT verbal of less than 290 and math of less than 510 were screened for possible deferred admission. Twenty-six students, all nonnative English speakers, were deferred for a year and asked to attend a CC for one year. To be admitted to UC Davis, they must maintain a CC GPA of at least 2.40 and take at least two English courses and pass them with grades of *C* or better.

12. In the UC Davis Subject A equivalent course now taught by a local community college, there are no uniform grading standards for the course. As a result, grading varies widely from instructor to instructor.

**References**

Earle-Carlin, S., & Scarcella, R. (1993, March). *Immigrant Students at Risk in ESL Writing Classes.* Paper presented at the meeting of California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Monterey.

University of California, Office of the President, Student Academic Services. (1995, August). *The University of California 1996-97 quick reference for counselors.* Oakland, CA: Author.

## Appendix A

### *a-f* Requirements for Admission as a Freshman to the UC System

a) **History/Social Science**—2 years required.

*Two years of history/social science, including one year of U.S. history or one-half year of U.S. history and one-half year of civics or American government; and one year of world history, cultures, and geography.*

b) **English**—4 years required.

*Four years of college preparatory English that include frequent and regular writing, and reading of classic and modern literature. Not more than two semesters of 9th grade English can be used to meet this requirement.*

c) **Mathematics**—3 years required. 4 years recommended.

*Three years of college preparatory mathematics that include the topics covered in elementary and advanced algebra and two and three dimensional geometry. Math courses taken in the 7th and 8th grades may be used to fulfill part of this requirement if your high school accepts them as equivalent to its own courses.*

d) **Laboratory Science**—2 years required. 3 recommended.

*Two years of laboratory science providing fundamental knowledge in at least two of these three areas: biology, chemistry, and physics. Laboratory courses in earth/space sciences are acceptable if they have as prerequisites or provide basic knowledge in biology, chemistry, or physics. Not more than one year of 9th grade laboratory science can be used to meet this requirement.*

e) **Language Other than English**—2 years required, 3 years recommended.

*Two years of the same language other than English. Courses should emphasize speaking and understanding, and include instruction in grammar, vocabulary, reading, and composition.*

f) **College Preparatory Electives**—2 years required.

*Two units (four semesters), in addition to those required in "a-e" above, chosen from the following areas: visual and performing arts, history, social science, English, advanced mathematics, laboratory science, and language other than English (a third year in the language used for the "e" requirement or two years of another language).*

*Note.* From *The University of California 1997–97 Quick Reference for Counselors.* 1995, August. University of California, Office of the President, Student Academic Services. Reprinted by permission.

## Appendix B

### Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum Subject and Unit Requirements

IGETC SUBJECT AND UNIT REQUIREMENTS

| *Subject Area* | *Required Courses* | *Units Required* |
|---|---|---|
| 1. **English Communication** One course in English Composition and one course in Critical Thinking/English Composition. Students transferring to CSU must take an additional course in Oral Communication. | 2 courses* | 6 semester units or 8–10 quarter units |
| 2. **Mathematical Concepts and Quantitative Reasoning** | 1 course | 3 semester units or 4–5 quarter units |
| 3. **Arts and Humanities** Three courses with at least one from the Arts and one from the Humanities. | 3 courses | 9 semester units or 12–15 quarter units |
| 4. **Social and Behavioral Sciences** Three courses from at least two disciplines or an interdisplinary sequence. | 3 courses | 9 semester units or 12–15 quarter units |
| 5. **Physical and Biological Sciences** One Physical Science course and one Biological Science course, at least one of which includes a laboratory. | 2 courses | 7–9 semester units or 9–12 quarter units |
| **Language Other than English*** Proficiency equivalent to two years of high school in the same language. Not required of students transferring to CSU. | Proficiency | Proficiency |
| **Total** | **11 courses*** | **34 semester units** |

* Students intending to transfer to CSU are required to take an additional course in Oral Communication and do not need to demonstrate proficiency in a Language Other than English.

*Note.* From *The University of California 1997–97 Quick Reference for Counselors*, 1995, August. University of California, Office of the President, Student Academic Services. Reprinted by permission.

## Appendix C
## UCLA Transfer Student #1

Background:

| | |
|---|---|
| Native language: | Vietnamese |
| Native country: | Vietnam |
| Major : | Applied Mathematics |
| Current UCLA GPA: | 3.070 |
| Other: | Fall '94 transfer student from LA-area CC with freshman composition credit |

*Instructions:* You will have 60 minutes to plan, write, and revise a formal academic composition on one of the two topics on the next page. Choose only one of the topics for your composition. Your composition will be graded on content, organization, and language use.

*Writing prompt:* Examinees were asked if they believed that a quotation from President Jimmy Carter (in which he warns that we are losing confidence in the future and unity of purpose) applied to any group they were familiar with.

*Student writing sample:*

Losing confidence in the future is very worse. It is threatening to destroy the social.

I'm still remember in 1987, after I finished high school at the age of seventeen. I lost my confidence in the future, because I lived under comunist control, they were discriminate, they did not let me get me in university or college; Eventhough I got very high in my G.P.A. At that time, I did a lot of bad things, I drank the a liter vine per day, I smoked and I was a gang member. I didn't care any one. In my mind, I always think, I have not thing in the future. I was losing confidenc in the future. So I did a lot of bad things.

Righ now, I lived in the United State I have change go to school and I know that if I do good in School, I will have a bright future.

Therefore, I think that if someone losing his/her confidence in the future is very worse for social.

## Appendix D
## UCLA Transfer Student #2

Background:

| | |
|---|---|
| Native language: | Chinese |
| Native country: | Taiwan (ROC) |
| Major : | Economics |
| Current UCLA GPA: | 2.236 |
| Other: | Fall '94 transfer student from LA-area CC with freshman composition credit |

*Instructions:* You will have 60 minutes to plan, write, and revise a formal academic composition on one of the two topics on the next page. Choose only one of the topics for your composition. Your composition will be graded on content, organization, and language use.

*Writing prompt:* Examinees were provided with two figures representing food production and industrial growth in developing countries and were asked to comment on the relationship between these two phenomena and the international movement to control pollution levels.

*Student writing sample:*

Develop or not, it always needs electric energy to provide the nation's development not only in food production but the famous problems how to solve it is art work.

Nowadays just in my country Taiwan ROC the inhabitants that a nuclear factory will be built in their small town disagree the police which the government has made Through the TV I can understand how badly this country need more electric energy and they always try to persuade these people to accept their idea and their garrentee of non-pollution. As everyone knows Taiwan is a good economic country now with its fast development in economic they surely have done many things compared to Mainland China. Taiwan has many factories many companies and a lot of heavy industrial factories. So with their fast development they need more electric energy in this small island, it is no doubted. Of course, they become a strong economic country but they just focused in economic development ignored pollution before when they planned to improve their nation economic construction. Nowadays everyone police the pollution, even the children. Because this pollution subconscious is planted in everyone's brain now instead of they have not known or later than other developed nations in this areas. So people take it seriously now in anywhere and anything. Nowadays even Taiwan government wants to have a new electric energy factory. It now takes them a big effort to explain this factory no pollution to their people.

Do the other side to see Europe Countries they do not have this argument in their country. Whatever their governments decide their people will follow but how

about their economic or food production. Certainly not reached as Taiwan has fast grown. It is pollution controls compared to economics. To see the US, US always notice pollution so US's food production is very good but US has a big land country. It is hardly to say US does not need electric energy for providing the food production that is US has a well-done foreseeing plan for the country so nowadays they do not have their argument in their nation.

Hopely my country Taiwan can have enough electric energy to develop the nation and less pollution to their people. Anyway it need to take wisdom no matter now or later.

## Appendix E
## UCLA Transfer Student #3

Background:

| | |
|---|---|
| Native language: | Armenian/Farsi |
| Native country: | Iran |
| Major: | Pre-biology |
| Current UCLA GPA: | 2.454 |
| Other: | Fall '95 transfer from LA-area CCs with 2 transfer-credit English courses |

*Instructions:* You will have 60 minutes to plan, write, and revise a formal academic composition on one of the two topics on the next page. Choose only one of the topics for your composition. Your composition will be graded on content, organization, and language use.

*Writing prompt:* Examinees were asked to comment on a survey report regarding the responsibility of the government to provide its citizens with certain rights and privileges.

*Student writing sample:*

In any country each government tries to do best for his people in the communities. On the other hand each individual also needs a suitable and successful life. For doing this both government and people of that community have to work hard, and together find out the ways of having a good life. One of the major point is education and health, in which they both are important for a successful and happy life.

The children and teenagers who want to get education, in the first place they need to be healthy. So that they can study Better and get education and help others. Second, they need support for their academic years, in which they have to pay their tuition of the school and also to cover other experince in relate to the school.

Besides, the students themselves and their parent which can help them to get

their education, with a mind free of any other problems, the government is the second source of students support that can help and supports, those student who realy want to educate and become a useful person in his or her country.

There are different kind of support and aide in which the parents and government can do to the children of the communities, specialy those families with low income; health and medical care is one of them in which they should be open to all the low income and homeless people, since illnesses can makes study hard and if someone does not have physical and health problem, his or her mind also can work and understands the problems better, and so he can find the solution for those problems easily and in this way he can help the community. for example, the U.S.A president's health care plan probably is a good way to help the people of the lower category of the life, and its help them to become more hopeful, so that the health problem would not be a main problem to the students and the children who want to become educated.

The second source of help that the government can do and acialy already is done in the schools, is the money support in which a student can get financial aid from the school and government, like myself, if the school couldn't help me with financial support I wouldn't be able to continue my education at UCLA, and thanks god and the government for this.

In addition having a good contry and community the people and the government have to help each other for having a healthy community with educated people who can have a successful and happy life. A healthy person, can understad better and also can find any solution to the problems faster and can helps people who need help.

The CATESOL Journal

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# Articulation Agreements Between Intensive ESL Programs and Postsecondary Institutions

Articulation between intensive English programs (IEPs) and other institutions has taken the form of articulation agreements which can be of considerable benefit to intensive English programs, postsecondary institutions, and international students. Many university-level intensive ESL programs operate outside the formal structure of another institution, and it is advantageous for these programs to establish cooperative agreements with postsecondary institutions, and so make it easier for their students to gain admission upon completion of their English language studies. Many postsecondary institutions, especially private ones, are eager to increase and diversify their enrollments, and IEPs can provide an important resource for student recruitment. This article describes some of the practical issues relating to articulation agreements between intensive ESL programs and mainstream postsecondary institutions. In particular, the article addresses (a) background issues and terminology relating to articulation agreements between IEPs and postsecondary institutions, (b) advantages of such agreements, (c) challenges associated with these agreements, and (d) procedures for establishing articulation.

## Background Issues and Terminology

### Intensive English Programs

IEPs are English as a second language programs in which students enroll from approximately 18 to 25 hours per week. The students are usually of university age (18 to 25) but they also may be older. Although IEPs vary in many respects, I refer here to programs designed primarily for international students who have come to the U.S. for the purpose of studying English and who then plan to continue their studies or training in a post-

secondary program. IEPs generally test their students upon arrival into the program and place them into levels of instruction based on their English language proficiency. Instruction is characterized as English for academic purposes and includes all language skills and academic preparation such as study skills, TOEFL and other types of test preparation, and practical computer applications.

**Types of IEPs**

The IEPs which are most relevant to this discussion are those whose students are not automatically enrolled in a postsecondary program by virtue of their enrollment in the IEP. It is worth noting that some postsecondary institutions admit international students directly into the institution; however, the students may be required to complete an intensive English program before they are mainstreamed or allowed to take regular postsecondary courses. Such IEPs are not the focus of this discussion.

Attention here is on proprietary IEPs (see, for example, Burns & Scofield, this volume) and on those which are operated by a parent postsecondary institution—for example, in an extension or auxiliary unit. In neither case are the students in these IEPs enrolled directly in a postsecondary program while they are enrolled in the intensive English program. Interestingly, both types of IEPs share much in common. Most of these IEPs are self-supporting; that is, they must cover all their expenses with the tuition they charge their students and most operate as small businesses, even if they belong within the organizational structure of a postsecondary institution.

Today, most IEPs are highly competitive, regardless of whether they are proprietary or somehow related to a postsecondary institution.

Some IEPs have increased their competitiveness based on the number and variety of postsecondary articulation agreements they have established. This is especially true of many proprietary IEPs which have made contracts with cooperating institutions, enabling their students to enjoy a campus location as well as make a smooth transition into the cooperating institution. An increasing number of IEPs which are operated through a postsecondary extension or auxiliary unit and which are not privately owned are also becoming more proactive in establishing articulation agreements, not only with their parent postsecondary institution but also with other institutions.

**Articulation Agreements**

For purposes of this discussion, an articulation agreement is an established, cooperative plan which facilitates the transfer of students from an IEP into a postsecondary program. Usually, some conditions or requirements are associated with this plan, and the IEP and the postsecondary institution monitor and negotiate these conditions in the course of their cooperation. In most cases, articulation agreements involve written policies and procedures, but they also may consist of verbal agreements between administrators in the two organizations. Although it is advisable to have written policies and procedures, successful articulation agreements usually involve ongoing communication between the parties involved in the process.

Despite the fact that articulation agreements can take a variety of forms and cover a wide range of issues, I will consider three different types of agreements: (a) those which involve conditional admission, (b) special application and transfer agreements, and (c) agreements regarding the level of English language proficiency required for admission. These different types are not mutually exclusive and, in many cases, they overlap.

**Conditional admission**

In order to assist prospective students in gaining admission to postsecondary institutions, a number of IEPs have established relationships and agreements with postsecondary institutions enabling them to become involved in the student placement process through conditional admission, also referred to as provisional admission, conditional acceptance, and provisional acceptance. On the basis of a prior agreement between the IEP and the postsecondary institution, the IEP assists the prospective student in applying to a postsecondary program. Such arrangements are often facilitated by an overseas, third-party agent or sponsor who is familiar with the conditional admission process.

Although there are many variations in conditional acceptance procedures, the process usually begins at the time students apply to the IEP, that is, before the students leave their home countries. In addition to submitting an application for admission to the IEP, students also send an application, application fee, and a complete set of materials for the designated postsecondary institution. These materials are sent to the IEP, and usually an IEP staff member checks the materials to see that all is in order and then sends the materials on to the postsecondary admissions office. This process is often easier when the admissions office is located on the same campus, but since many IEPs work with multiple postsecondary institutions, the application may be sent to a different campus, city, or state.

The postsecondary admissions office then reviews the admissions packet to see that all materials are in order and that the overseas applicant is qualified for admission. If anything is missing or if there are questions, the admissions officer contacts the IEP staff person in charge of conditional acceptance, who in turn contacts the student if additional information or materials are needed. Basically, the admissions officer verifies that grade point requirements and all other prerequisites have been met; however, at the time the application is reviewed, it is usually assumed that the student will not have sufficient proficiency in English to be admitted, and this is the most common condition to be met before the student can gain admission to the postsecondary program. To meet the condition for admission, the student will have to achieve a specific TOEFL score or another established level of English language proficiency. Additional conditions may involve other test scores, for example, the Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT), or specific courses that must be taken before the prospective applicant can be admitted to the postsecondary institution.

Once the postsecondary institution grants the conditional admission, a letter of conditional admission is usually sent to an IEP staff member, who then sends this letter along with an IEP acceptance letter, appropriate visa materials, and other orientation materials to the student or third-party agency. In cases in which the IEP is located on the parent postsecondary campus, it may be possible to send visa application materials (e.g., an I-20) indicating that the student has been admitted to the postsecondary institution pending completion of a designated period of intensive English language study.

Such conditional acceptance arrangements can be extremely helpful to students in countries where it is difficult to leave the country or to get a visa unless one has been admitted to a postsecondary institution. Although not a guarantee that students will be granted permission to leave their country or be given a visa to enter the U.S., written statements of conditional admission can improve their chances of being allowed to emigrate to pursue English and postsecondary studies. Conditional acceptance agreements can be especially helpful if the timing for English language study has been coordinated with the estimated date of admission to the postsecondary program. With careful planning, the students may be able to complete their language training just in time to gain admission.

**Other transfer and applications agreements**

Many IEPs also have articulation agreements applicable to students who are currently enrolled in intensive language study but who have not yet applied to a postsecondary program. In such cases, the IEP may have

arrangements with certain postsecondary institutions which facilitate priority application processing and placement for qualified students. As with conditional acceptance, it is crucial to time applications to allow for adequate English language training and to meet appropriate entrance dates.

### The role of English language proficiency in articulation agreements

Some IEPs can demonstrate convincingly that students who have satisfactorily completed a specific level of instruction in the IEP have a level of proficiency generally equivalent to an average TOEFL or other test score. This can be done relatively easily over time by correlating levels of instruction with end-of-level test scores; for example, many IEPs have access to student TOEFL scores, and many give the institutional TOEFL at the end of each term. In such cases, the articulation involves coming to agreement about which IEP level of instruction or other proficiency criterion is acceptable for admission to the cooperating institution in lieu of the TOEFL or some other test. In addition to requiring the completion of a specific level of instruction, some agreements call for recommendations by an IEP administrator or several of the student's instructors.

## Advantages of Articulation Agreements

### Advantages for Postsecondary Programs

The most obvious advantages for the postsecondary institution lie in the area of student recruitment, particularly for those with limited budgets and means of contacting international students. In such instances, the IEP assumes most of the marketing costs and can serve as a marketing and recruiting representative. Given that many postsecondary institutions charge out-of-state tuition, they can benefit from the increase in international student enrollments.

Articulation agreements with IEPs also result in diversification and internationalization of the student body and the educational program, objectives which often are mandated by law and by institutional policy.

### Advantages for IEPs

IEPs have much to gain from articulation agreements with postsecondary programs. Through the establishment of linkages with one or more postsecondary institutions, the IEP enhances its student services as well as its ability to function in the highly competitive business of intensive English language training. The more options for continued study and training that the IEP can provide to its students, the more likely it will be able to attract them. This applies both to students who wish to apply to postsec-

ondary programs before entering an IEP and to those who want to wait to decide on a course of postsecondary study until they are enrolled in a language program.

Aside from enhancing its competitive standing, the IEP can benefit in other ways from articulation agreements with postsecondary programs. Especially in cases in which a relatively large number of IEP students intend to pursue a specific academic program or a special training program, the IEP can tailor its curriculum to meet specific purposes—for example, English for business or engineering—thereby making the ESL program more relevant to student needs and, in turn, increasing the likelihood for enhanced student motivation.

Finally, many international students prefer IEPs which provide so-called "no TOEFL" options described above, that is, which allow them to transfer to a postsecondary institution on the basis of an IEP recommendation or the completion of a given level of instruction in the IEP. Thus, such language proficiency articulation agreements can be perceived both as a competitive advantage for IEPs as well as an advantage for students with high test anxiety.

### Advantages for Students

From the previous discussion, the advantages of articulation agreements to students are fairly obvious: they facilitate the transition from one institution to another, and, in reference to conditional acceptance, they can make it easier for students to emigrate.

### Challenges Associated with Articulation Agreements

Although there are distinct advantages to having articulation agreements between IEPs and postsecondary programs, there are also some difficulties and obstacles that can challenge and complicate the establishment and maintenance of such agreements.

The biggest obstacle for both the IEP and the postsecondary program is the time and cost of additional administrative work which is involved in the process. The IEP faces a considerable up-front investment of time and energy in establishing articulation agreements. Usually, this is an ongoing process since some relationships change and new agreements may be needed. Once a relationship has been established, it needs to be promoted in order to attract students who will be candidates both for the IEP and for the cooperating postsecondary program.

It is worth noting also that marketing and explaining articulation agreements is no easy task. Many students and third-party organizations overseas do not understand the U.S. educational system, and explaining the

system and how one transfers from one program to another can be difficult considering language and cultural differences. This is further complicated by the fact that many international students do not understand the U.S. community or junior college system and the articulation agreements that these two-year colleges often have with four-year institutions.

Postsecondary programs also have to spend more time processing applications and communicating with IEP staff. Problems for both institutions are complicated by the fact that international applications are often incomplete and require additional correspondence to ensure the successful initiation of the process. Cost-cutting efforts in many postsecondary institutions can present a serious obstacle to the implementation and maintenance of articulation agreements. In this regard, many IEPs can demonstrate how their conditional admissions staff can facilitate the work of the cooperating institution by ensuring that no application packets are forwarded for review until all materials are present, by ordering materials in the manner prescribed by the admissions office, and by computing GPAs according to admissions office standards.

Students can also create problems, the most common of which involves conditional admission and student no shows. Although students may have completed all aspects of the application process and may have been admitted to a postsecondary program, they may change their minds and abandon the prescribed conditional admission option. Given the amount of work that goes into applications for conditional admission, a significant number of no-shows can challenge the viability of the articulation agreement. In some instances, a processing fee can help discourage such changes in or abandonment of plans.

Another obstacle to articulation agreements lies in the fact that institutions, because of their prestige, exclusivity, or large number of applicants and limited number of spaces, see no advantage to establishing articulation agreements with IEPs. Others prefer to have direct contact with their applicants, thereby eschewing the third-party involvement of an IEP. This can be a problem for students as well as IEPs because students who want to take advantage of conditional admission may feel that their choices of postsecondary programs are limited. There are often more options for community colleges and lesser known private schools than for well-known and highly competitive institutions.

Some IEPs make a case for themselves vis-à-vis postsecondary institutions by asserting that student performance in the IEP provides a good indication of day-to-day work and study habits. IEP course loads, homework assignments, and grading policies often approximate those of other institutions, and performance over an extended period of time in an IEP can serve as a predictor of academic success.

Although articulation agreements are generally advantageous to students, they can be expensive, especially in cases in which both the IEP and a third-party overseas agency may charge for the services.

## Establishing Articulation Agreements

### Selecting a Partner Institution

The first step in establishing an articulation agreement involves selecting an IEP or a postsecondary institution with which to cooperate. In some cases, the selection process may be straight forward because the IEP may be located on the premises of the postsecondary institution. However, even when they share the same location, the two organizations may have to engage in considerable negotiation to arrive at a viable agreement.

In other cases, the decision may involve some research and analysis. For example, if a postsecondary institution wants to increase its number of international students and there is no IEP on the premises, it may have to search for a reputable IEP with which to cooperate. By the same token, if an IEP wants to establish linkage(s) with other postsecondary programs, it may be necessary to survey current IEP students to determine what types of postsecondary programs the majority of students wish to enter. It also may be necessary and advisable to confer with overseas agents, representatives, and sponsors, in order to get ideas about the types of postsecondary programs which are most in demand.

From the standpoint of the IEP, there may be several obvious factors which influence the selection of the partner postsecondary institution, for example, the major field or type of program IEP students or applicants wish to pursue, the length of the program, student GPAs and degree or prior experience in the field, and the location of the program. For example, if the IEP has a relatively large number of students wishing to pursue degree programs in engineering, the IEP should select candidate postsecondary institutions which have well-established engineering programs. However, if the majority of these engineering students have low GPAs, it may be necessary to identify a postsecondary program with a flexible admissions policy.

### Contacting the Institution

Once a candidate partner has been selected, the next step is to contact an administrator in the cooperating institution. In deciding whom to contact, a general rule of thumb is to aim high—contact the director of the IEP or the director of admissions or director of international admissions at the postsecondary institution. If one has access to higher ranking officials,

so much the better. Another bit of advice is be patient. One rarely connects with the key party on the first call, and it will usually take persistence and several telephone calls before the appropriate contact is made. The reason for contacting the highest, relevant administrator is that subordinate employees may be less than enthusiastic and view the proposed articulation agreement only in terms of an increased workload.

It is wise to be well prepared before communicating with the appropriate administrative person—develop a list of reasons which will help sell your proposal for cooperation and be ready to point out the advantages to the prospective partner. For example, if you are an IEP administrator contacting a private school with strong programs in business and engineering, you may wish to emphasize that your program has been selected by several sponsoring agencies to provide preacademic training for government scholarship recipients and that your program has a strong reputation for monitoring student performance and progress. In addition, it may be relevant to cite other postsecondary institutions with which you have established cooperative agreements.

One of the first questions to ask is, Would you like to increase the number of international students on your campus? Given economic conditions in many postsecondary programs coupled with various mandates for social and cultural diversity, it may be difficult for the admissions person to decline the offer.

Although the postsecondary administrator who wishes to establish a cooperative agreement with an IEP generally will find the task to be an easy one, it is advisable to stress that contact with the IEP has been initiated with the goal of increasing the number of international students in the institution and that the institution is willing to be flexible in evaluating candidates for admission.

**Following Up**

Assuming that appropriate contacts have been made and that both parties express interest in exploring the possibility of cooperation, the next step is to exchange materials which provide background information about the programs in question, for example, descriptions of programs and courses, admission policies and requirements, and, if applicable, descriptions of existing cooperative agreements with other institutions. For example, the fact that an IEP has had a successful articulation agreement in place for a number of years with another well-known postsecondary institution can be persuasive in establishing a new relationship.

In cases in which the postsecondary institution or the IEP frequently pursues cooperative agreements with other institutions, it is valuable to

have a follow-up letter along with a set of materials ready for mailing immediately after the initial discussion. The follow-up letter should restate the benefits of cooperation both for the prospective partner and for the student. It pays to refer to special services that your organization will provide which will serve to expedite the processing of applications. In the case of IEPs, it is also advisable to establish credibility by reporting correlations of student TOEFL scores with their level of instruction in the program as well as any other data and procedures which demonstrate the academic standards of the program.

Here again, considerable patience may be in order as it often takes several weeks before contact can be reestablished. For this reason, it is advisable, once it is clear that there is mutual interest and that program materials will be exchanged, to set a date for a follow-up discussion.

It should be noted that a number of potential agreements break down at this point for a variety of reasons: People are busy and do not follow up; parties decide that they are not interested; the cooperation does not seem feasible based on existing policies and standards, or staffing levels preclude cooperation.

**Making the Agreement**

Assuming that both parties are interested in pursuing an agreement, it is wise to establish basic policies and procedures and to identify staff members who will be involved in the articulation process. It is best if the administrators and staff can have a face-to-face meeting to set the tone for the cooperation and to spell out procedures in the event that problems or special circumstances arise. Although the day-to-day work of handling and processing applications will no doubt be done by support staff, administrators should monitor the cooperation and be consulted when difficulties arise. As with all human relationships and cooperation, the manner in which difficulties are resolved is as important as the initial agreement to cooperate.

The most common difficulty arises from what is perceived to be slow processing. Administrators should agree on a time frame for application processing and for ways to follow up when applications are not processed within that time. In the context of maintaining good relations between IEPs and postsecondary institutions, there is much to be said in favor of diplomacy and interpersonal skills in all areas and types of communication, especially telephone conversations.

## Conclusion

Despite all the factors involved in articulation agreements between IEPs and postsecondary institutions, for those willing to make the commitment of time and energy, the rewards to the cooperating institutions and their students are great. Indeed, it is hard to fault any cooperative agreement between educational institutions which benefits all parties concerned. As the cooperating partners become better acquainted with each others' programs, the potential for greater understanding and appreciation of their respective roles increases. Those affiliated with mainstream institutions gain greater insight into the challenges of language learning and academic preparation, and they can exert influence on the kinds of training that are provided. Similarly, those associated with IEPs are afforded an opportunity to follow up on their students, monitor their successes and failures, and, with this informed perspective, adapt the IEP training to meet student needs more effectively. It is with such cooperation that we come to appreciate the bridges that result from articulation between IEPs and postsecondary institutions. ■

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# Secondary Education in California and Second Language Research: Instructing ESL Students in the 1990s[1]

Many researchers, including myself, have claimed that second language (L2) research has direct implications for teaching ESL students in the state of California. Researchers have advised public school teachers to provide ESL students with large quantities of unstructured, comprehensible English input (Cummins, 1989; Krashen, 1985, 1993; Krashen & Terrell, 1983), to reduce the amount of form-focused language instruction that they give their ESL students (Krashen, 1985; Terrell, 1982), to avoid direct, corrective feedback (Cummins, 1989; Krashen, 1985), and to focus their students' attention solely on the gist of messages rather than on the linguistic forms these messages take. (See, for instance, Cummins, 1986, 1989 and Krashen, 1985.) This paper examines the wisdom of this advice. Here I question: (a) whether the research underlying the advice is dated, applied incorrectly, or misunderstood; and (b) whether California's diverse immigrant populations, populations that have changed dramatically over the past 20 years, have suffered as a result of such advice. By examining data from the University of California at Irvine (UCI), I make the case that L2 students are coming to UCI without sufficient academic English to undertake university coursework successfully, even when they have spent their entire childhoods in California schools and have been educated by teachers who have followed the advice of L2 researchers.

In the first section, I consider the changing demographics of California's schools. The second section reviews research on three factors thought to affect L2 proficiency: input, corrective feedback, and instruction. I conclude by arguing that the research pertaining to these factors, though relevant to the instruction of certain populations in certain locations and at certain times in California's history, cannot be generalized to the many diverse populations of immigrants living in California today. More

specifically, I suggest that learners who have grown up in ethnic communities and who have been exposed to large quantities of comprehensible standard English input—through classes, television, radio, newspapers, magazines, pleasure reading books, and textbooks—are *not* acquiring standard English. Rather, it seems that they are acquiring the nonstandard varieties used by their peers. By *nonstandard varieties*, I refer to those dialects of English that are not used by middle-class, educated adult speakers of English (Romaine, 1984). Such varieties might include Korean-English, Spanish-English and, perhaps somewhat arguably, *English interlanguage*, the language used by nonnative English speakers in the process of acquiring English (Selinker, 1972, 1992).

## Demographics

Continuous waves of immigrants have changed the educational, cultural, and linguistic makeup of California. Almost 40% of all immigrants to the United States in the 1980s ended up settling in California. Diverse groups of people—including rural and urban Mexicans, middle-class Taiwanese and Koreans, and Salvadoran refugees, as well as other groups such as the Vietnamese, Pacific Islanders, Iranians, Russians, and Afghans—have all come to California. From 1970 to 1980, the number of children who were classified as limited English proficient (LEP) in the state rose 254% (Crawford, 1995). By 1993, one out of every four California students was classified as LEP (Crawford, 1995). According to the 1995 California Language Census, the number of LEP students enrolled in the state's public schools continues to increase.[2] Over a million (1,282,982) public school children are considered LEP because their English is not sufficiently developed to participate on par with native English speakers in English-only classrooms (Macías, 1995). The children come from diverse non-English language backgrounds: About 78% are Spanish speakers, 4% are speakers of Vietnamese, 2% are speakers of Korean, 2% are speakers of Hmong, and 2% are speakers of Cantonese. There are also large numbers of students in California who speak Pilipino (Tagalog), Cambodian, and Farsi. The fastest growing language groups in California are Russian, Indonesian, Armenian, Urdu, and Mien (Yao). (See Macías, 1995, for detailed discussion.)

Because California's ESL students come from very diverse cultural backgrounds, they have varying values, beliefs, and traditions pertaining to education. Observations of their speech and writing reveal that they have acquired different levels of English proficiency in each of the four language skills areas—listening, speaking, reading and writing, and that they follow diverse patterns of acculturation. Some live in ethnically integrated areas where they hear a lot of English outside school, while others live in ethnic

communities where they hear almost no English at all. Many others live in areas where they hear only nonstandard varieties of English.

The majority of immigrant students in California only attain the English needed for unskilled employment. Often those who do gain enough English proficiency to enter California's institutes of higher education have not acquired academic English language proficiency, even when they have completed their entire elementary and secondary educations in the United States. This is the case at the University of California, Irvine (UCI), where roughly 65% of the students are born outside of the United States and speak a first language other than English. In the academic year 1995-1996, approximately 300 students were required to take ESL courses. Despite the ESL students' many years in the United States (on average, about eight years), excellent high school grade point averages (above 3.5, in the upper 12% of their high school graduating classes), and high scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (above 1000), their English language problems prevented them from achieving success in freshman writing courses, and they were required to take ESL courses to address their language difficulties.

## The English Language Difficulties of UCI ESL Students

The essay in Appendix A exemplifies the type of writing that UCI ESL students produce during an hour-long entrance proficiency writing exam.

### Vocabulary Difficulties

The vocabulary problems of UCI ESL students are serious. Despite years of education in the United States, their vocabularies are often extremely limited. Their writing is sometimes dotted with words that they have memorized for the verbal portion of the SAT. Note that in the writing sample in Appendix A, the student used words such as *ubiquitous*, *perspicacious* and *tumultuous*. Unfortunately, as indicated by Examples 1 and 2, UCI ESL students often use these "SAT" words incorrectly.

***Example 1***
She ate the *torrid* food quickly.

***Example 2***
He reach the *pungent* train.

In addition, they also use what are referred to as *acoustic approximations*. These are words and expressions that are picked up inaccu-

rately in conversations and used incorrectly. (See Examples 3 and 4.)

***Example 3***
*Firstable*, this essay talk about leaders.

***Example 4***
The book I read for my book report was *Catch Her in the Right*.

As indicated by Example 5 below, they sometimes use inappropriate words and expressions from conversational English in their academic writing.

***Example 5***
Mercy killing is a right way to decrease one's suffering if one is brain dead or could not covers from cancer. For example, *this guy* was on a machine like ten or thirteen years with no consciousness before he died.

In addition, they do not know the restrictions governing the use of words. (Refer to Example 6.)

***Example 6***
The clock *stood patiently* on the table.

Note that in Example 6, the student who produced the sentence seems to think that clocks, like people, are able to stand patiently. Students often have difficulty knowing when and how to use words metaphorically. They often know the most basic meaning of a word without understanding its alternate meanings. They are unable to use academically valued hypothesizing and synthesizing vocabulary such as doubt, infer, assert and conclude (Nippold, 1988) and instead use more general words such as think and say. They frequently confuse words that have similar sounds. One UCI student wrote an entire essay on *adversity*, which he confused with the word *diversity*, while another student wrote an entire essay on *perseverance*, which he confused with the word *preservation*. In addition, students have difficulty using word forms correctly. For instance, they sometimes turn nouns incorrectly into adjectives or adjectives incorrectly into verbs. Sentences such as *He afraided* instead of *He was afraid* occur repeatedly in their speech and writing.

None of this is surprising. A study by Zimmerman and Scarcella (1996) indicates that UCI ESL students know fewer than 50% of even such

basic academic words as *magnitude*, *development*, and *summary*. In a test of academic words given to 192 UCI ESL students the students reported that they knew over 90% of the words tested. However, they were actually only able to use an average of 47% of the words in sentences. (See also Scarcella & Zimmerman, in press.)

**Morphological and Sentence Structure Problems**

In addition to vocabulary problems, UCI ESL students have serious difficulties with morphology and sentence structure. Articles are often used incorrectly (as in *The knowledge is good*). Noncount nouns are often used as count nouns (as in *The T.A. gave me many good advices*). Constructions with modal auxiliaries are often used incorrectly (as in *He can studies with me tonight*), and the students often rely on the verb *would* to indicate past tense to avoid having to use simple and irregular past tense forms that they do not know. Students frequently use the wrong verb tense (as in *Even today I still remembered when my mom died*), and sometimes only use one verb tense (usually present), because they do not know how to shift between tenses effectively. Causative structures are avoided or used incorrectly (as in *My mom got me make my bed*), and students have great difficulty using conditionals (*If I am you, I study engineering*), passive constructions (*The book written by Shakespeare*), and relative clauses (*Jay likes the girl who he married her*).

**Other English Language Difficulties**

The students also have rhetorical problems related to their inability to use English morphology; for instance, they have difficulty using pronouns to establish reference, using verb tense to frame events in narratives, and using language that is appropriate for the audiences for whom they are writing. Analyses of other aspects of their English language proficiency might well indicate other weaknesses.

Why do such bright, successful high school students enter UCI with such weak English language skills? To examine some of the reasons for the students' limited English proficiency, it will be useful to review the literature on L2 acquisition. Much of this research has been directly applied to teaching ESL children in public schools throughout the state of California. In the last 10 years, teachers seeking the language development specialist certificate were required to read it. More recently, students enrolled in teacher credential programs across California have been required to study this research in specially designed teacher credential programs.

## Second Language Acquisition Research

The research advocates the following practices: (a) providing unstructured (i.e., not focused on form), comprehensible English input to learners in the context of meaningful, natural communication; (b) deemphasizing corrective feedback; and (c) limiting form-focused English language instruction. These principles are supported by theory-based research of the early 1980s.

### Providing Unstructured, Comprehensible English Input

Research of the early 1980s—largely focusing on child first language learners, adult ESL international students, and foreign language learners—suggests that a sufficient quantity of unstructured, comprehensible English input tailored to the current English proficiency levels of ESL students aids their overall English language development. Krashen (1981, 1985) developed what he termed the comprehensible input hypothesis, suggesting that a level of English input appropriate for the students, one that is neither too difficult nor too easy, facilitates English language acquisition. In addition, he suggested that it is unnecessary to structure input for language development. His colleague, Terrell, explained:

> If the acquirer continues to receive sufficient comprehensible input and the affective conditions for acquisition are met, speech will continue to improve in fluency and correctness. Acquirers will slowly expand their lexicon and grammar, producing longer and longer phrases as they begin to acquire the rules of discourse and the broad range of skills we refer to as communicative competence. (1982, p. 121)

For Krashen, optimal classrooms for L2 development are places where rich input is provided. In his view, this input is, above all, comprehensible and focused on meaning rather than form. It is interesting and relevant to students and is not grammatically sequenced. It is sufficient in quantity and is not structured in such a way that it contains specific lexical items or grammatical structures. (For more recent discussions, refer to Krashen, 1989, 1993.)

While there have been many critiques of Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis (see, for example, Faerch & Kasper, 1986; Gregg, 1984; McLaughlin, 1987; and White, 1987), most pedagogues and researchers concede that the hypothesis "has powerful descriptive powers and captures the features of the second language acquisition process that teachers intuitively recognize as important" (Johnson, 1995, p. 83). In California it has

been widely applied to classrooms across the state. ESL textbooks that are approved by the Department of Education advocate the hypothesis. Through credential programs and in-services, California teachers are taught that if they provide their students with meaning-oriented, natural, unstructured comprehensible English input, then their students' English skills will improve.

Despite its intuitive appeal to researchers and practitioners alike, there exist numerous problems when the comprehensible input hypothesis is applied to the ESL classroom. A major problem with the hypothesis concerns Krashen's notion of *unstructured* input. Because of previous theory-based but locally untested research on comprehensible input, California teachers were advised repeatedly not to structure deliberately the input that they provide their students. However, unstructured English did not necessarily expose students to academic English.

It might be useful here to clarify what I mean by academic English. I use this term to refer to the words, expressions, and grammatical structures that are used in academic settings. Although not everyone agrees on the particular vocabulary used in university settings and the boundaries between categories are fuzzy and tend to overlap, many researchers suggest that the following types of words characterize academic English:

- general words such as *come* and *busy* that are used across academic disciplines (as well as in everyday situations outside of university settings),
- technical words such as *stethoscope* and *arachnid* that are used in specific academic fields, and
- nontechnical, academic words such as *research* and *interpretation* that are used across academic fields.

Words may have specialized meanings in more than one field; for instance, they may be technical in some fields and metaphorical in others. Academic English also includes specific grammatical features such as passive constructions, relative clauses, and conditionals. These features occur relatively infrequently in casual conversation in comparison to their use in academic discourse.[1] (For a discussion of the features of academic English prose, see Biber, 1986, 1988.)

Recent research suggests that exposure to academic English input contributes to students' ability to acquire academic English; however, students are not regularly exposed to many of the features of this input through

casual conversations or pleasure reading. Contrary to what researchers have suggested, teachers may need to structure special activities to expose learners to specific forms of academic English input. (See, for instance, Celce-Murcia, 1991; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; and Swain, 1985, 1989.) Perhaps UCI ESL students were not exposed to academic English in their high schools; this might partly explain their difficulty using academic English appropriately in their writing.

However, even when teachers carefully structure classroom input to expose students to academic English, students may not acquire it; this is because, *structured or unstructured, comprehensible input alone does not ensure L2 acquisition.* (See for instance, Doughty, 1991; Long, 1988; and White, 1987.) Comprehensible input helps acquisition—and it may be essential to language development—but it does not guarantee acquisition. More specifically, the comprehensible input hypothesis does not explain the failure of UCI's students to acquire standard English. Between 1981 and 1995, thousands of UCI ESL students spent their entire childhoods in the United States and were exposed to countless hours of naturally occurring English input—through exposure to the media, their English-medium classrooms, and their extended interactions with the English-medium environment that surrounded them. They studied textbooks, memorized poetry, watched hours of television each day, and read comics, magazines, and novels. Some participated on debate teams and even served as valedictorians at their senior class graduations. Although we cannot assume that students were exposed to all the features of academic English, we can assume that the students were exposed to enough samples of standard English features such as definite articles (like *the*) and *wh*-questions (*who, what, where*) to acquire these very basic and frequently occurring features of standard English. We can assume that much of the English input that UCI students received represented the standard variety of English spoken by middle-class native English speakers. We can also assume that most of it was comprehensible. UCI students typically report that they understood what they read in their high school textbooks or heard in class. Yet for these students, exposure to comprehensible standard English input did not lead to the development of even such basic features of standard English as prepositions, articles, and verb tense.[4] Like the native English-speaking students who did not acquire nativelike French in the French immersion program studied by Swain (1985), UCI L2 students who had spent the majority of their lives in the United States did not acquire nativelike English. Like the students studied by Swain, their language was dotted by forms speakers of the standard variety of language would consider deviant. As Swain (1985) points out, "sim-

ply getting one's message across can and does occur with grammatically deviant forms. . ." (p. 248).

Perhaps one reason UCI L2 students failed to acquire standard English is that they prefer to use the variety of nonstandard English that they have acquired from valued peers in their ethnic communities. In a three-year longitudinal study, Scarcella (1996) found that Korean-American children who lived in a Korean-American ethnic community were exposed to large quantities of nonstandard English in their schools and in their churches. These children acquired the linguistic features of the nonstandard varieties of English spoken by admired peers—not the variety of English to which they were exposed when they watched American television, read English-language books, and listened to their English-speaking teachers.

Although UCI ESL students were exposed to thousands of hours of standard English, they report that they acquired nonstandard varieties of English from their nonnative English-speaking friends, often in school settings. They describe a variety of experiences using English in their high school classes. In some classes, where they primarily did seat work and had few opportunities to engage in peer-directed learning activities, they used English interlanguage when talking to their friends during lunch periods and breaks. In other classes, where their high school teachers exercised little control over the classroom, they sometimes spent the better part of their classroom periods listening to students shouting over their teacher. In these raucous classes, the students used English interlanguage to communicate, even when they were exposed to standard English in their textbooks. In yet other classes, students participated in academically valued, student-led classroom activities where they were encouraged to use their critical thinking abilities. In cooperative learning groups, they worked together on various projects and tasks—for instance, in social studies California History Day projects and in math Problems of the Week assignments. In these collaborative group learning situations, they used English interlanguage when interacting with their nonnative English-speaking classmates. Thus, most high school classrooms were not ideal places for UCI ESL students to acquire English because they put them in close, continuous contact with classmates whose variety of English deviated (as did their own) from the standard. By observing their classmates use such forms as *could goes* and *homeworks*, they may have learned that the forms that they themselves employed were also used by valued peers.

The importance of peers in language development has long been established. Stewart (1964) argued persuasively that children as young as nine are influenced by the language of their peers rather than the language of the school. Most of this research indicates that peer influence is strongest in

children ages nine to 18. Beebe (1985) summarized a complex hierarchy of input preferences and suggested that students "consciously or unconsciously choose to attend to some target language models rather than others" (Beebe, 1985, p. 404). Peer models and ethnic group models seem to be preferred by UCI students.

When Krashen first proposed the comprehensible input hypothesis in the early 1980s, the need to consider the varieties of English used in ethnic communities was simply not as great as it is today. Studies indicating that language classrooms could provide rich sources of comprehensible input for language development (such as those reported by Asher, 1972; Asher, Kusudo, & de la Torre, 1974; Edwards, Wesche, Krashen, Clement, & Krudeneier, 1984; Hammond, 1988; and Swaffer & Woodruff, 1978) did not examine California public schools in ethnic communities in the 1990s. These studies, widely cited by L2 pedagogues such as Richard-Amato (1996), Scarcella (1990) and others, mainly focused on input to adult language learners who were not surrounded by speakers of nonstandard varieties of English. In ethnic communities where children primarily interact with others who speak diverse varieties of English, teachers may need to specifically structure situations so that students are exposed to large quantities of standard English. They may also need to use this input in their own communication and attend to it. In brief, simply providing students with comprehensible English input, even when this input represents the standard variety, does not seem to guarantee standard English language development when students have already acquired a stabilized nonstandard variety of English.

**Deemphasizing Corrective Feedback**

Research of the early 1980s suggested that direct error correction did not lead to improved performance in an L2. Summarizing this research, Krashen (1981) suggested that students "improve in grammatical accuracy by obtaining more input, *not by error correction* [italics added]" (p. 64). He went on to suggest that error correction might be helpful to "some students" in some limited situations for some "easy-to-learn rules." Today's California teachers are taught to view errors as a necessary part of the developmental process of learning a second language. Additionally, they are often instructed that error correction should be kept to a minimum and be limited mainly to expansions of learner utterances. Writing teachers are frequently advised to focus on how effectively L2 learners convey their communicative intent rather than on mechanical and grammatical aspects of language such as subject-verb agreement or pronoun consistency. All this advice probably underestimates the linguistic ability of many secondary

ESL students as well as their strong cultural beliefs concerning the necessity of error correction (Celce-Murcia, 1991). For instance, in many Korean-American communities, teachers who do not correct student errors are considered inept. In these communities, there is a widespread belief that error correction helps students to improve their English language development (Chin & Scarcella, 1996). Errors are considered neither good nor bad but correctable. In a study of UCI student failure to acquire English, Earle-Carlin and Scarcella (1993) interviewed students about the corrective feedback they received prior to coming to UCI. Two students said:

- I want people correct me. Correcting show me my errors. But no teacher ever tell me what wrong with my English. They only tell me it very A+.

- No teacher correct my grammer. How can I learn? (p. 15)

UCI ESL students generally feel betrayed by their high school English teachers. "Why did my high school teachers give me all *A*s if my English is not good? I feel tricked," lamented one UCI student who was required to take ESL courses (Earle-Carlin and Scarcella, 1993, p. 13). Many UCI students report that their high school teachers allowed them to think that their English needed no improvement when it actually required a great deal. Perhaps teachers were tempted to raise the self-esteem of their ESL learners, leading students to believe that they had acquired perfect standard English— when, in fact, they had not.

**Limiting Form-Focused English Language Instruction**

Teachers are often admonished by researchers to limit the form-focused language instruction that they provide their students. In other words, they are typically told not to give "grammar lessons" and not to present rules about the English language. According to Krashen (1981), the best teachers put "grammar in its proper place." In his words,

> Some adults, and very few children, are able to use conscious grammar rules to increase the grammatical accuracy of their output; and even for these people, very strict conditions need to be met before the conscious knowledge of grammar can be applied ... Children have very little capacity for conscious language learning and may also have little need for conscious learning, since they can come close to native speaker performance standards using acquisition alone." (p. 64)

There are several difficulties with this line of reasoning. First, without such instruction, many children in California fail to acquire even an informal variety of standard English, let alone academic English, and while it is probably true that children are not as adept at learning grammar rules as adolescents and adults, it probably is also the case that Krashen, who conducted research on this topic prior to the influx of immigrants in California's schools, underestimated the role of instruction in vocabulary, grammar, and rhetoric in language teaching.

A second objection to the notion that English should not be instructed in California schools concerns the effectiveness of English instruction. There is now considerable evidence that form-focused language instruction significantly improves the UCI ESL students' ability to use grammatically correct sentences in their writing. Prior to enrolling in freshmen English courses, UCI ESL students are given form-focused ESL instruction related to specific grammatical features—including verb tenses, passive structures, relative clauses, and modal auxiliaries. Studies of the students' progress in learning these structures and using them in their writing indicate that these very bright students are highly capable of learning grammatical structures through instruction. Applied linguistics research of the early 1980s does not confirm this prediction. More recent research, however, does. (See, for instance, Doughty, 1991; Ellis, 1990; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Long, 1988, 1990; Pienemann, 1988; and Pienemann & Johnson, 1987.)

## Teaching Practices

While it is true that budgetary cutbacks throughout the state of California undoubtedly served to undermine the English language instruction UCI ESL students received in secondary schools, it is also plausible that teaching practices in this state have contributed to UCI ESL students' failure to acquire academic English. Public school teachers may have unwittingly prevented UCI ESL students from acquiring English when they did not push them to communicate beyond their current English proficiency levels, provide them with valued sources of academic English, teach them to use this English, correct their language mistakes, and inform them of their actual progress acquiring English.

The pedagogical approaches discussed below—advocated by researchers such as Cummins (1989), Kagan (1986), Krashen (1993), Richard-Amato (1996), and Scarcella & Oxford (1993)—and enthusiastically supported by the California Department of Education were primarily based upon research of the early 1980s that did not consider the myriad of complex, constantly changing factors affecting the English language devel-

opment of California's immigrants of the 1990s. Such research was largely locally untested.

**Cooperative Learning**

One of the instructional approaches educators have adopted to stimulate English language development is cooperative learning. In cooperative learning,

> A teacher assigns small groups of students, often with different talents and needs, to work together on a project. Such an arrangement has benefits for a wide range of students, as documented by many studies. Students who need help on a task can often learn most easily from a peer who has mastered the task, and the 'masters' benefit cognitively and emotionally from organizing and explaining what they know. In discussing and defending their ideas with each other, students come to a more complex understanding than if they had worked on a problem alone. . . . Cooperative learning has particular benefits for students who are learning a second language. Accomplishing a cooperative task successfully requires students to engage in meaningful communication about the task at hand, which is the optimal context for language learning. (Kagan, 1986, p. 17)

Regrettably, I would argue that for many L2 students, cooperative learning is not the optimal context for learning academic English since engaging in meaningful communication about nonacademic tasks will not lead to the development of academic English. Further, it may not help students acquire standard English but may instead increase the amount of nonstandard English input valued peers give them, build their confidence in using nonstandard English, contribute to the stabilization of their own features of nonstandard English, and help them become fluent in nonstandard English.

**Process Approaches**

Even the highly praised process approaches to writing may fail students who are ready to acquire academic English. One difficulty with these approaches is that they are often misapplied in such a way that they give students the message that language forms are unimportant because the editing stage, in which language errors are corrected, is the last component of the writing process. However, it is this last component of the writing process which might be critically important to learners in ethnic communi-

ties, for this component may help them to notice the differences between standard English and their own English interlanguages. A second possible difficulty with process approaches to writing concerns the use of peer collaboration, when students brainstorm, revise and edit their writing in pairs and groups. Prewriting activities, including class discussions or brainstorming, may facilitate the writing process, but probably contribute little to the students' acquisition of standard English.[3] If L2 students are matched with other L2 students who have not acquired standard English, they may overlook such errors as *firstable* and *on another hand*. These error types may then become stabilized through consistent use and exposure during peer review and editing sessions. This happens because learners might regularly compare the language that they produce with perceived targets, in this case, their peers' interlanguages. Also, the students' peers might expose them to other nonstandard varieties of English, and when these varieties are in contact, stabilized group varieties sometimes emerge. (See, for instance, Trudgill, 1986.)

**Sheltered English and Other Current Approaches**

The simplified English often employed in sheltered English classes may also result in student failure to learn academic and standard English. Although these classes were not designed to teach advanced ESL learners, many school districts are offering advanced learners these sheltered English courses. If students are to develop proficiency in academic English, they must be exposed to reading materials that are authentic and academic; at some point, students must learn to read academic texts—essays, articles, and books—that have not been simplified for nonnative speakers.

Other approaches have been misapplied in ways that might also impair L2 development. For instance, misapplied whole language approaches might fail students who are trying to acquire academic English when teachers, misunderstanding these approaches, encourage their students to ignore language forms completely or promote an exclusive focus on the gist of texts. Once in academic settings, students need to know how to use language forms correctly. Understanding the gist of their texts is not enough.

In addition to these approaches, many of the activities presently encouraged in California schools may also undermine ESL students' acquisition of standard English. Journal writing and quickwrites (rapid writing activities in which students write about their own experiences and respond to prompts or source texts) are two such activities. When teachers encourage their students to keep daily, uncorrected personal journals and do not provide students with abundant opportunities to read, synthesize a large variety of standard English texts, and accurately express their opinions

about these texts in standard English, teachers may unwillingly be contributing to the stabilization of nonstandard English forms.

The use of quickwrites, in which students synthesize their own and others' ideas and opinions, can similarly undermine L2 development. Although these popular classroom activities provide students with large quantities of comprehensible standard English input through the medium of reading and promote writing fluency, they may not help students acquire standard English if teachers do not correct the student writing produced or if the learners' attention is not focused on the various ways in which meaning is expressed in texts and on the specific linguistic forms used in texts.[7] Thus teachers who use these techniques without providing corrective feedback risk promoting the use of nonstandard English features.

Other commonly used activities that might fail to help ESL students acquire standard English include such student-directed activities as debates and discussions of school-related issues in which students engage in extended talk with their peers. When students are deprived of the opportunity to interact with admired and respected native English-speaking peers, they do not receive the input they need to acquire nativelike English. Even when these interactive activities do provide students with exposure to standard English, they do not guarantee the acquisition of this English if students have already acquired from more valued peers a highly functional nonstandard variety of English that serves them well.

## Conclusion

Researchers of the early 1980s strongly argued against interfering with English language development and urged teachers instead to provide students with unstructured comprehensible English input. It is time to reconsider this advice. I am not suggesting a return to monotonous drill-and-kill grammar exercises or teacher-centered grammar lectures; what I am advocating is a careful consideration of the English language needs of California students. What is needed now is a thorough analysis of the instruction which best facilitates the English language development of students at different English proficiency levels and ages, of diverse cultures and backgrounds, and of diverse schools and communities.

Despite the absence of such an analysis, the English difficulties of UCI ESL students suggest the need for different instructional practices than those that are often advocated in California schools. Getting secondary students in ethnic communities to acquire standard English might entail such interventionist practices as actively encouraging the use of standard English in student speech and writing (Scarcella & Oxford, 1990; Swain, 1985) and providing students with form-focused instruction and feedback. A number

of ESL methods and approaches presently being used to teach ESL students academic English—including content-based instruction, specially designed academic instruction in English (SDAIE) , and cognitive academic language learning (CALLA)—might be promising. Specific teaching practices will need to be carefully developed to address local concerns for use with specific ESL and L2 populations (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). All groups of learners may not need the same type of input, feedback, and form-focused instruction.

The English difficulties of UCI ESL students have strong implications for today's secondary classroom teachers. Not only do they suggest that a reconsideration of instructional practices is necessary, but they also suggest that student assessment should be rethought. ESL students should not be given the message that their English is either completely native or near-native, when, in fact, most speakers of standard English would consider such English substandard. UCI ESL students, most of whom came from ethnic communities, had average grades of *A*s and *B*s in their high school advanced placement English courses. These students deserved a more accurate assessment of their English from their high school teachers—not to penalize them, but to help them gain the skills that they needed to communicate effectively in an English-speaking society that, like it or not, in the 1990s does not promote those who have not acquired standard English. As Wong-Fillmore (personal communication, 1995) points out, there are now ESL lifers, life-long learners of ESL, who have failed to acquire English despite spending their entire lives in the United States. To level the academic playing field, ESL students in California high schools need increased exposure to academic English, form-focused instruction on how to use this English, corrective feedback provided in appropriate ways, and opportunities to use academic English in supportive environments throughout their educational careers. ■

**Endnotes**

1. Some of the ideas for this paper came from discussions with Lily Wong-Fillmore who reviewed UCI's ESL program in 1992 and was surprised by the large numbers of students enrolled in UCI courses who had received straight *A*s in their high school honor English courses. I am very grateful for her input. Errors in content remain my own.

2. Between 1994 and 1995 the number increased by 3.9%.

3. While learning academic English causes difficulties for all university students, it may be especially critical to academic success. Knowledge of academic English is very important in reading. Because academic words occur frequently and tend to carry much of the meaning of academic textbooks (Coady, 1993; Na & Nation, 1985; Nation, 1990), these words help students to understand these books (Laufer, 1989, 1991; Na & Nation, 1985; Nation, 1990). A survey of 186 Midwestern ESL university students in credit English courses revealed that 70% perceived their "small vocabulary" to be their major weakness when reading English (Sheory & Mokhartari, 1993). Vocabulary problems prevent L2 readers from reading fluently and efficiently (Carrell, Devine, & Eskey, 1988; Jenkins & Dixon, 1983; Nagy & Anderson, 1984).

4. Krashen (1994) might argue that a socio-affective filter (consisting of affective variables) prevents English input from being processed by UCI ESL learners. If this is true, then thousands of UCI ESL learners have been prevented from acquiring academic English because of this filter.

5. Many UCI ESL students also tell their ESL instructors that they received no corrective feedback on their essays and that their grammar mistakes were always overlooked. This is not surprising given the large class sizes in California high schools, the difficulty teachers have correcting large numbers of student texts, and the many English teachers who have not been trained to teach L2 students and who may have little knowledge of English grammar themselves.

6. In addition, the learners' awareness of the ways in which they themselves might use these texts as examples for constructing their own meanings might need to be developed (Harklau, 1995).

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## Appendix A

### Sample Writing from ESL Proficiency Writing Exam

Is there someone in your life who is "just like family" to you, someone who you feel very close to or who you respect a lot? When I saw this topic question, all I could think of was my best friend christine. We haven't known each other so good, and became very close friends.

When I think of christine, I see her sweetest smile that no one else can ever have. She is the perspicacious person who know how I feel in almost any situations. Sometimes, it even scares me because of the fact that someone knows me too well. But when I am with her, I can be myself. I don't have to hide my feeling. Because she empathetic, she already knowing my feeling. Christine is like sister I've never have. She care too much and helps me in many ways.

I still remembered my first car accident in my heart. It was the tumultuous day when I told christine to come with me to one of my friends' house. Firstable she told me she was busy but we ended up going together. It was a remote house I've never went before. So I didn't want to go alone. When christine heared that, she mention about she'll be glad to come with me. Unfortunately, I ran through a red light, and I hitted car. I was so scared that christine got hurt bad. I seriously couldn't say anything because it was all my fault.

I was afraid that christine'll blame me for every thing. But she was different. I've never seen her so calmly in my life. Christine ask me how I was and started to talking to the police. And she basically took care of matter, while I was in state of shock. Even after that accident, she was the one to ask me how I was feeling and tried to take care of me. According to the author Karen Lindsay, she write, "And the truth hidden by the myth is that people have always created larger family. . ." I definitely agree with her. Christine is ubiquitous part of my life just like my biological family is to me. And I want to keep this relationships all through my life.

The CATESOL Journal

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# The Challenge of Articulating ESL Courses in Postsecondary Education: Policy and Legislative Issues

FARIBA I. ARRIVES IN THE OFFICE of a community college ESL faculty member during spring registration with her transcript from Foothill College in northern Santa Clara County. She wants to find out which ESL or English courses she should take in view of the advanced ESL she took at Foothill. The instructor tells Fariba that only a placement test will determine the ESL or English courses that match her skills. Fariba is concerned that her registration will be delayed and that classes she needs will be closed. Time and money are significant issues for Fariba and other students trying to move from one community college to another community college, the California State University (CSU) or the University of California (UC). The faculty member's problem is whether Fariba has attained the linguistic proficiency which she needs to succeed in her courses because no matrix exists comparing equivalent California Community College (CCC) ESL courses to each other or to courses in the CSU or UC. Moreover, no statewide ESL curriculum exists in higher education. This lack of course comparability across institutions may be seen as a barrier to ESL students' ability to move easily from one institution to another. Indeed, in 1988, the CCC chancellor's office staff believed that ". . . there is a need within the ESL discipline to develop some commonality of course content, structure and standards" (Farland & Cepeda, p. 8).

In answering the following questions, the extent of the challenge involved in developing common course content, structure and standards may be seen.

- What are the state priorities and policies that affect articulation of courses and how do they affect ESL curricula?
- Do they facilitate the movement of students between schools?

- Is a common ESL curriculum a viable means to lower barriers to transfer or should more effective ways be pursued?

In addressing such issues, this article first reviews the state priorities for curricular functions and course standards and how they developed. Second, it summarizes formal intersegmental articulation policies, other statewide efforts to facilitate student transfer, and CSU and UC credit types for ESL courses and their effect on articulation. Third, it reports on a study which investigated issues of credit and remediation as they apply to ESL courses in the CCCs. The findings indicate how credit for ESL courses has been classified with respect to the state standards for community college courses. They also describe how intersegmental articulation policies have affected transferability and General Education-Breadth Agreements for ESL courses. Furthermore, the study highlights the challenge of articulating ESL courses in the context of the usual definition of articulation.

## Community College Priorities and Course Standards

One way of articulating courses is by setting statewide policies which establish priorities for college curricula. These priorities are intended to emphasize the amount of attention and resources which particular curricular functions should receive.

### *Curriculum Priorities*

The Joint Committee for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education reaffirmed curriculum priorities for CCCs in its final report: "The California Community Colleges shall offer academic and vocational instruction at the lower division level for both younger and older students, including those returning to school, as their primary mission" (1989, pp. 14–15). Courses and programs must be consistent with this mission as well as reflect other educational values in order to be approved by the chancellor's office. Remedial education, English as a second language, and state-funded noncredit adult education are essential and important functions, and community service courses and programs are authorized functions. These priorities had already been incorporated in the community college reform legislation, AB1725, passed in 1988.[1]

### *Standards and Procedures for Assigning Credit*

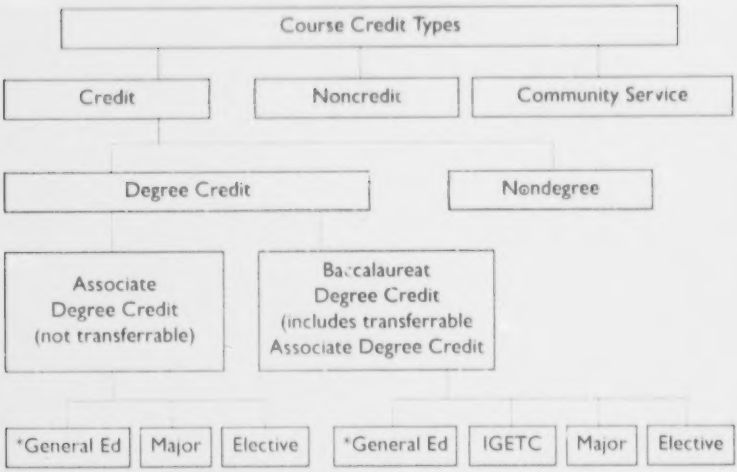
Setting statewide policies for course standards is another way of articulating courses. These standards are meant to help ensure that the quality of education is the same within the California Community Colleges, California State University and University of California. According to the

> courses approved through the local curriculum review process as suitable for the fulfillment of associate degree and general education requirements must reflect an understanding by those reviewing the courses of both the expectations of the Board of Governors and those of 4-year colleges and universities. (California Community Colleges, Chancellor's Office , 1995a, p. 19)

**Course Classification by Credit Type**

The curriculum standards and procedures determine whether courses are considered to be at college level or not. These standards and procedures are outlined in Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations.[2] Community colleges must use them to determine the types of courses and programs which are appropriate to the associate degree and to determine which courses should constitute the general education program. Implementation of program and course standards and oversight by the chancellor's office are intended to ensure "not only that tax dollars are being expended for programs that are as well designed as possible but also that these programs fulfill purposes that best reflect the priorities of California taxpayers and other constituencies" (California Community Colleges, Chancellor's Office, 1995b, p. iii). These standards operationalize priorities by assigning different credit types to courses (see Figure 1), thus creating a hierarchy of status for courses. Courses which meet the standards for the associate degree receive college-degree credit while courses which do not meet these standards may receive nondegree credit. Standards are also outlined for noncredit and community service courses. "Credit is higher education's coin of the realm; it designates that both the student and the courses have met certain standards" (California Postsecondary Education Commission [CPEC], 1983, p. 118). College-level credit is the most valuable "coin."

**Figure 1**
**Classification of Credit Types**




*Note:* GE, IGETC, major, and elective credit may overlap.

## Development of Course Standards

The standards now encoded in Title 5 have evolved over time, with impetus for their development derived from fiscal as well as academic considerations. A summary of the development process shows a long-standing focus on issues surrounding remediation and indicates how policymakers intended the standards to apply to ESL courses.

### Earlier minimum standards

Stewart (1982) describes the development of the early minimum standards. These standards classified courses as credit, noncredit, and community service classes not eligible for state funding (including fee-based avocational and recreational classes, seminars, lecture and forum series, workshops and conferences as well as professional and occupational in-service classes). Stewart notes that, because of the educational and monetary value of credit,

> . . . it is subject to politics as individuals and organizations seek to acquire or to influence its allocation. Students covet—and need—the credit in order to gain credentials,

> student financial aid, and even athletic eligibility. Colleges, universities, and other public educational institutions may emphasize credit rather than noncredit programs because the former often receive a higher level of state support. Both individuals and institutions may also pursue credit for its real or perceived prestige. (1982, p. 48)

**ESL and the CCC definition of remediation**

According to Stewart, following the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, the community colleges experienced a decline in revenues of $418 million in 1978-79. While the legislature provided funds to compensate for the shortfall, it also began an intense scrutiny of community college programs to correct growth in every kind of program. "The state lawmakers seized upon the credit/noncredit dichotomy as a way to distinguish more clearly the nature of the state's financial commitments" (p. 48). In response to the legislature, Title 5 regulations were adopted in 1981 which differentiated credit from noncredit courses: "Quite deliberately, the new minimum state standards were intended to facilitate the fiscal accountability standards established earlier by the legislature" (p. 49). According to Stewart, the greatest amount of debate centered on whether to grant credit to those courses designated as developmental in the classification guidelines, that is courses emphasizing "basic skills in mathematics, reading, and English—including English as a second language at the most basic level. . ." (p. 50). The statewide Academic Senate argued that developmental courses should not be given college-degree credit because it viewed these developmental courses as remedial—designed to bring students up to college level skills, not to advance them within the postsecondary system.

Continually at the center of discussions about the development of community college course standards has been the issue of remediation (now called precollegiate basic skills), its cost to the state, its proper role in the community college curriculum, and in postsecondary education in general. With respect to ESL, policy makers have generally viewed all but the two levels carrying equivalency with freshman composition and the course immediately preceding them as sharing characteristics with other precollegiate basic skills courses—that is, as preparing students for college work. ESL faculty, on the other hand, have argued that the academic rigor of ESL courses is comparable to that of foreign language courses, and that just as native English speaking students receive foreign language credit for all foreign language courses they take, so too should English language learners receive college credit for all ESL courses they take—irrespective of any equivalency of these courses with prefreshman or freshman English

(California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages [CATESOL], 1994a; Martino, 1992; Petersen & Cepeda, 1985). A tension exists, then, between perceptions and goals of ESL professionals and those of the constituencies which developed the Title 5 regulations.

**Concern over extent of remedial courses in higher education**

The development of the course standards in Title 5 continued to center on granting credit for remedial courses. In 1981, many faculty members, including the statewide Academic Senate, expressed concern that students in many degree-related courses exhibited such a broad range of skills that it was impossible to teach courses at college level and that consequently the credibility of the associate degree was being eroded (Palomar College Curriculum Review Committee, 1987). This concern was furthered by the fact that the main source of growth of the colleges over the previous 10 years had occurred in the area of remedial, college preparatory, and recreational and avocational courses. In response, community college leaders wanted a clearer definition of the term college level and requested that only courses at that level be counted towards the associate degree and certificates. They also recommended, in order to ensure continued open access, that college preparatory courses be assigned workload credit—that is, credit that is not applicable toward a degree but which enables students to satisfy minimum courseload requirements and so qualifies them for financial aid. They also recommended that these courses be fully funded.

During this same time, because of its concern about the number of underprepared students entering colleges and universities and because of state fiscal constraints, the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) identified the improvement of student preparation and skills as a top priority. The Commission committed itself to providing information on the extent of remediation in California's postsecondary institutions and thus produced its 1983 report, *Promises to Keep*.

In *Promises to Keep* , CPEC decided to use the terms *remediation* and *remedial education* despite certain difficulties in defining the terms and despite the fact that the words were highly charged. It defined remedial education as ". . . courses and support services needed to overcome student deficiencies in reading, writing, and mathematics to a level at which students have a reasonable chance of succeeding in regular college courses including vocational, technical and professional courses" (p. 3). With respect to language skills, the Commission defined *remedial reading courses* as those provided to students who read below the 12th-grade level. *Remedial writing courses* were considered to be courses below the transfer-level freshman composition course. While the Commission did not use the

word remedial in reference to ESL, it did define ESL courses ". . . as English courses taught to students whose primary language is not English in order to prepare them for regular college courses" (1983, p. 4). CPEC had also recommended that baccalaureate credit not be awarded to remedial courses but rather that they be offered for workload credit.

In 1985, the CCC Task Force on Academic Quality submitted proposals to the board of governors which resulted in the standards laid out in Title 5 (Farland, 1985a, 1985b). These standards operationalized a definition of remediation and differentiated among the credit modes for associate-degree-level courses, nondegree-credit courses, noncredit courses, and community service courses.[1] In addition to meeting the Title 5 standards of rigor, associate-degree-level courses had to fall into one of these specific categories:

> (a) all lower division courses accepted toward the baccalaureate degree by the CSU or UC or designed to be offered for transfer
>
> (b) courses that apply to the major in nonbaccalaureate occupational fields
>
> (c) English courses not more than one level below the first transfer-level composition course, typically known as English 1A. Each student may count only one such course as credit toward the associate degree
>
> (d) all mathematics courses above and including elementary algebra
>
> (e) credit courses in English and mathematics taught in or on behalf of other departments and which, as determined by the local governing board, require entrance skills at a level equivalent to those necessary for the courses specified in sections (c) and (d) above. (California Community Colleges, 1995a, pp. 21 & 22)

There is some ambiguity as to how categories (a) and (c) pertain to ESL. Some colleges consider their credit ESL courses to be English courses and a part of a sequence of English courses. Some ESL courses at these colleges might be considered equivalent to the first transfer-level composition course or one level below. Other ESL courses might be considered to be below the most basic English composition course for native speakers of English (which may be two or three levels below the first transfer-level course). These colleges assign credit to their ESL courses depending on whether they fit into category (c) or not. If the courses are not considered to be equivalent to the first transfer-level English course or one level below, they are assigned nondegree-applicable credit.

On the other hand, other colleges offer ESL courses designed to transfer to and be accepted by the CSU and/or UC—category (a). Whether they are equivalent to the first transfer-level composition course or one level

below—category (c)—is not considered relevant. These colleges consider their ESL courses to have more in common with foreign language courses than with English. A course in Spanish or German is assigned associate-degree credit if it is designed for transfer or if it is accepted toward the baccalaureate degree by the CSU or UC. Since ESL is a foreign language for students in the courses, faculty members design rigorous college-level ESL courses which the CSU and UC in fact accept for transfer. Such course are assigned associate-degree credit because they can be categorized in category (a) just as Spanish or German can be.

### ESL and the CCC definition of remediation

In developing its proposals for course standards, the Task Force on Academic Quality recommended that the board of governors adopt a definition of remediation appropriate for community colleges:

> Remediation is that process which is designed to assist students to attain those learning skills necessary to succeed in college transfer, certificate or degree courses and programs, and includes classroom instruction as well as other prescriptive interventions to assist students in the pursuit of their educational goals and objectives. (Farland, 1985c, p. 8)

The task force took the position that ESL should not be classified as remedial unless students were deficient in skills in their native languages or unless they had learning problems.

> ESL . . . may also be taught at the associate or baccalaureate level. For example, colleges in all segments offer an ESL course which receives credit as English 1A. Course content, criteria and evaluation are identical to the regular English 1A. The only significant differences are that this course is recommended for students whose primary language is other than English and instructors of these courses are trained to recognize special problems faced by these students, such as the use of idioms or misinterpretations brought about by literal translations. (Farland, 1985c, p. 8)

Chancellor's office staff recommended the following addition to the task force's definition of remediation:

> Remedial instruction includes courses designed to develop reading or writing skills at or below the level required for enrollment in English courses one level below English 1A, mathematics courses below Elementary Algebra and

> English as a Second Language courses consistent with the levels defined for English. (Farland, 1985d, p. 9)

This definition of remediation, minus the statement on ESL, was the basis for the standards and categories of courses which would define associate degree applicable courses in Title 5. The chancellor's office staff believed that one effect of this addition would be "to specify, in terms of curriculum content, the lower level courses that can be applied to the associate degree. As a corollary, therefore, it also defines credit courses below the specified levels as not applicable to the degree (i.e , remedial)" (Farland, 1985b, p. 8).

Chancellor's office staff also recommended that the board of governors "direct staff, in consultation with the Chancellor's Task Force on ESL and the colleges generally, to develop guidelines for determining what levels of ESL are equivalent to the standards applied in English for determining what is and is not remedial" (Farland, 1985d, p. 9).

The Chancellor's Task Force on ESL, appointed in 1983 to respond to *Promises to Keep*, responded that ESL as an academic area should not be categorized as remedial (Petersen & Cepeda, 1985). However, another issue the task force faced was whether ESL courses should be classified as credit-bearing given the stricter guidelines for credit being developed at the time.[4]

The task force report stated: "It is clear that ESL, like any other course offering in community colleges, must first meet the established criteria for credit and noncredit courses as mandated in Title 5, Section 55002 (Petersen & Cepeda, 1985, p. 10). The report further stated with respect to ESL courses that

> only some current offerings should apply toward fulfillment of the unit requirements for the Associate Degree. Credit courses which do not meet these stricter criteria should be offered either as noncredit or as credit courses which do not apply to the Associate Degree. (Petersen & Cepeda, 1985, p. 11 & 12)

Thus, the task force adopted the firm position that only courses equivalent to freshman composition or one level below should be accorded associate degree status.

A subsequent report, *English as a Second Language: A Progress Report on Existing Board Policy Directives*, reiterated these recommendations regarding the classification of ESL courses as to credit type. "Like any other instructional area, ESL is subject to the same criteria as specified in Title 5 of the Administrative Code" (Farland & Cepeda, 1988, p. C-1). This means that degree applicable ESL courses must fit into one of the course categories specified in Title 5.

### Precollegiate basic skills

Remedial courses are now included among precollegiate basic skills courses. Title 5 defines these as the courses in reading, writing, computation, learning skills, study skills and ESL which a district designates as nondegree credit (California Community Colleges, 1995b). One of the standards for approval says that assignments in the nondegree credit courses must be rigorous enough to ensure that students who complete a required sequence of precollegiate basic skills courses will have acquired the skills needed to succeed in college-level courses (California Community Colleges, 1995a).

## California Articulation Policies and Procedures

The standards in Title 5 aim to ensure that community college level courses are equal in quality to similar courses in the CSU and UC. Thus, these standards provide the basis on which articulation agreements between the segments can be made. The California Community Colleges, CSUs, and the UCs have developed policies and procedures to facilitate the transfer of students. In order to do this, colleges and universities develop and maintain documents called *course articulation agreements* which affect the articulation of ESL courses. The definition of articulation, which is the basis for articulation policies and procedures described in the *Handbook of California Articulation Policies and Procedures*, refers to

> the process of developing a formal, written agreement that identifies courses (or sequences of courses) of a "sending" institution that are comparable to, or acceptable in lieu of, specific course requirements at a "receiving" campus. (California Intersegmental Articulation Council [CIAC], 1995, p. 1)

Based on these agreements, students who successfully complete an articulated course are theoretically prepared for the next level of instruction at the receiving institution.

## Course Articulation Agreements and Procedures

This section summarizes the kinds of course articulation agreements and the general articulation procedures which have been developed between the community colleges and UCs and the CSUs as set forth in the *Handbook of California Articulation Policies and Procedures.*

Articulation agreements are classified as follows: courses accepted for baccalaureate, general education-breadth, lower division major preparation, and course-to-course.

**Courses Accepted for Baccalaureate Agreements**

These agreements identify courses "that are baccalaureate level and therefore acceptable by a receiving institution (or system) to fulfill both admission and baccalaureate elective credit" (CIAC, 1995, p. 4).

**CCC courses accepted by the UC system.**

In the UC system, the UC Office of the President develops and annually updates the list of courses accepted for baccalaureate credit called the Transferable Course Agreement (TCA) with community colleges for all UC campuses. The TCAs are developed according to policies of the Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS), a committee of the UC Academic Senate which is charged with developing undergraduate admissions requirements (see Celce-Murcia & Schwabe, this volume). The basic principle used to determine the transferability of community college courses is whether the course is comparable to a lower division course offered at any of the UC campuses in scope, level, and prerequisites. If the course is not comparable to any offered at UC, it must be baccalaureate level in terms of its purpose, scope and depth. "ESL transfer credit is awarded for courses . . . which emphasize writing. Courses which focus on listening, reading, or speaking skills are not considered appropriate. Also, it is expected that the writing required will be (at least) at the paragraph level" (CIAC, 1995, p. 52). Presently, the University of California accepts eight units of ESL courses in this category.

**CCC courses accepted by the CSU system**

In contrast to how lists of transferable courses are developed between community colleges and the University of California, the responsibility for developing agreements for courses accepted for baccalaureate credit between the CSU system and community colleges rests with the articulation officer at each community college. In consultation with the individual community college curriculum committee, the articulation officer at each campus identifies courses appropriate for the list of transferable courses, also called baccalaureate-level courses. Executive Order 167 issued by the Chancellor's Office of the California State University states the CSU system's general policies and procedures that govern articulation of transferable courses. It states that courses designated by the faculty of accredited institutions as baccalaureate credit shall be accepted by any campus of the CSU. The appropriate authorities at the CSU campus shall determine the extent to which the courses satisfy the particular requirements of a degree. Those courses not otherwise applied are acceptable as general electives to the extent that the particular degree objectives permit.

**General Education-Breadth Agreements**

These agreements indicate "those courses that a student can complete at a sending institution to satisfy the general education requirements at the receiving institution" (CIAC, 1995, p.5). These agreements include a list of courses which are taken from the transferable course agreements.

**CCC courses accepted by the UC system**

For the UC, responsibility for developing these agreements rests with each individual campus. Only ESL courses which are the equivalent of freshman composition meet the terms of these agreements.

**CCC courses accepted by the CSU system**

For the CSU, individual community college campuses have the responsibility for certifying the agreements between their campuses and those of the CSU. Executive Orders 595 and 405 issued by the CSU system establish policies and procedures which apply to the development of the agreements. Whether community college ESL courses meet general education requirements at CSU campuses depends on whether a particular community college has certified the courses as meeting the requirements. (See Table 1 to compare CCC articulation processes for CSU and UC.)

**Table 1**
**Articulation Processes for CCC and CSU and UC**

| RECEIVING INSTITUTIONS | | |
|---|---|---|
| Type of Agreements | California State University | University of California |
| Transferable Course Agreements | Developed by CCCs in compliance with the CSU Executive Order 167. (Baccalaureate List) | Developed by the UC office of the President for each CCC. (Transferable Course Agreement) |
| General Education Breadth Agreements | Developed by CCCs in compliance with CSU Executive Orders 405 and 595. | *Campus/College Specific* Developed between CCC and UC by each UC campus. |

*Note.* From *Handbook of California Articulation Policies and Procedures* (p. 6). California Intersegmental Articulation Council, 1995, Sacramento: Author. Reprinted by permission.

Generally, ESL courses which meet general education requirements are either equivalent to freshman composition or satisfy credit requirements in Category C (usually called the Humanities category in community colleges), established in CSU Executive Order 595 (CIAC, 1995) which includes the arts, literature, philosophy and foreign languages. Two criteria in the executive order could affect the classification of ESL courses. Part IV, Entry Level Learning Skills, states

> Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations, Section 40402.1, provides that each student admitted to the California State University is expected to possess basic competence in the English language and mathematical computation to a degree that may reasonably be expected of entering college students. Students admitted who cannot demonstrate such basic competence should be identified as quickly as possible and be required to take steps to overcome their deficiencies. Any course completed primarily for this purpose shall not be applicable to the baccalaureate degree. (CIAC, 1995, p. 52)

Some community colleges classify their transferable general education ESL courses in the humanities category along with foreign languages. In respect to this category, Executive Order 595 states that

> foreign language courses may be included in this requirement because of their implications for cultures both in their linguistic structures and in their use of literature; but foreign languages courses which are approved to meet a portion of this requirement are to contain a cultural component and not be solely skills acquisition courses. (CIAC, 1995, p. 80)

**Lower Division Major Preparation Agreements**

These agreements specify the courses at the sending institution that fulfill lower-division major requirements at a receiving institution. The agreements may be initiated at either sending or receiving institutions. ESL courses are not articulated under these agreements because they are not part of a major.

**Course-To-Course Agreements**

These agreements include courses at a sending institution "which are

'acceptable in lieu of' a corresponding course at a receiving institution" (CIAC, 1995, p. 5). Few ESL courses have been articulated in this way except for ESL courses which are considered to be the equivalent of freshman composition. However, since most ESL courses transfer as electives, this means of articulation is seldom relevant.

### Intersegmental Curriculum Agreements and Common Numbering System

Two other means of smoothing the transferring of courses from community colleges to the UC and CSU are the Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) and the California Articulation Number (CAN) system.

### Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum

The IGETC is a series of courses that community college students can use to satisfy general education requirements at any CSU or UC. However, completion of the IGETC is not a requirement for transfer to CSU or UC. Under IGETC, only freshman English can be used to satisfy the general education writing requirement. English as a second language courses "cannot be used to fulfill the English composition requirement" (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, 1995, p. 44). This means that even if transferable courses identified as ESL can meet the freshman composition requirement at a community college, they do not fulfill the IGETC English composition requirement.

### California Articulation Number System

The statewide CAN system implemented in 1985 identifies community college courses that are transferable and are considered comparable in content and academic rigor. The system "streamlines the articulation process by eliminating the need for every [CCC] campus in the state to articulate their course with every other campus in order to provide needed transfer and articulation information to prospective transfer students" (CIAC 1995, p. 46). However, no community college ESL course which is not designated as freshman composition is identified with CAN numbers.

### Types of Credit for ESL Courses at the CSU and UC

The kinds of credit awarded to ESL courses in the CSU are diverse, and this diversity affects attempts at articulating ESL courses with community college courses. The *Report of the English as a Second Language Workgroup* (California State University, Office of the Chancellor, 1988)

indicates that ESL courses at the CSU are offered for baccalaureate credit, and workload credit and without credit. ESL courses at community colleges are not generally articulated with ESL courses at the CSU on a course by course basis. As a result, community college ESL courses below the level of freshman composition may transfer as electives or with general education credit in the humanities category to some CSU campuses. Ironically, many of those campuses only grant baccalaureate credit to their own ESL courses which are the equivalent to freshman composition. Also, these ESL courses are not officially called ESL courses.

*English as a Second Language at the University of California* (University of California, Office of the President, 1989) indicates that ESL courses at the University of California are offered for baccalaureate as well as workload credit. Again, community college ESL courses may transfer to a UC campus which may have similar courses that do not apply to the baccalaureate degree. The catalog of one community college indicates that some ESL courses which do not apply to the associate degree do, however, transfer to the CSU and UC.

The situation that emerges from the transfer agreements is a confusing one, at best. There are ESL composition courses which meet the CCC freshman writing requirement for the associate degree but do not fulfill IGETC freshman writing requirements at the CSU or UC (since no composition course with ESL in its title meets the IGETC writing requirement). Hence, a student who has taken an *ESL* freshman composition course at a CCC would have to take an English freshman composition course to meet IGETC requirements. In such a situation, what incentive do students have for taking a course designed to meet their linguistic needs but which does not advance them towards a baccalaureate degree?

It seems apparent that California's formal standards and mechanisms intended to facilitate articulation of courses between the community colleges and the CSU and UC do little to assist an ESL student in both satisfying English requirements and achieving academic proficiency in the L2. The ways that ESL courses develop at the community colleges, CSU, and UC do not facilitate comparison or equivalence. In addition, the role of ESL is seen, in many ways, to be outside the mainstream of courses that college students are expected to take. Thus, ESL courses fall outside the measures taken by the system to make transitions between institutions easier.

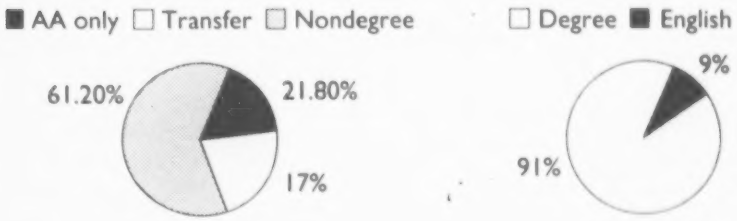
## A Survey of Credit and Articulation in California Community Colleges

To illustrate how colleges are applying state standards to award credit to community college ESL courses and how intersegmental articulation

policies on transferable course agreements are being applied, a census (Garlow, 1995) was taken of all of the credit courses in the 106 California community colleges as printed in current college catalogs (see Figure 2).

While 61.2% of the 1,378 credit ESL courses were offered for nondegree credit, 21.8% were offered for associate degree only, and 17% transferred and received baccalaureate credit. Only 9% of all degree-credit ESL courses were identified as English courses, either equivalent to freshman composition or one, two, or three levels below. Evidently, degree credit has been assigned to most ESL courses without defining them in relation to English courses.

**Figure 2**
**Credit Type Assigned to Community College ESL Courses**




*Note.* From "The Academic Worthiness of ESL Courses in the California Community Colleges as Indicated by Credit Status" by Katheryn Garlow, 1995. Unpublished manuscript.

Articulation agreements between community colleges and the CSU and UC generally consist of Baccalaureate Level Course Agreements and General Education-Breadth Agreements (see Table 1). Since articulation agreements between community colleges and the CSU and UC are made through different processes, courses that transfer to one institution do not necessarily transfer to the other. One hundred forty-eight baccalaureate degree-credit courses transferred only to the CSU, nine only to the UC and 76 to both.

ESL courses which apply to a degree can either meet General Education-Breadth requirements or are applied to a degree as elective credit. Relatively few ESL courses meet general education/breadth requirements at any level.

Of those 301 associate-degree courses which do not transfer, only 2% satisfy general education requirements while 98% can be used as CCC elective credit.

With respect to the 148 courses that can be applied to both the associate degree at the CCC and baccalaureate degrees at the CSU, one would expect that consistency would exist in the way that credit can be applied to the two degrees. That is not the case, however. More of these courses meet general education and English composition requirements for the associate degree than for the baccalaureate degree (see Table 2).

**Table 2**
**A Comparison of How Tranferable Credits Are Applied to the Associate and Bachelor's Degrees by Segments**

| | Credit Types | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Courses transferable to CSU[a] | | |
| Segment | Elective | GE | English Comp |
| CCC | 82.4% | 14.2% | 3.4% |
| CSU | 98.6% | .7 | .7 |
| | Courses transferable to UC and CSU[b] | | |
| | Elective | GE | English Comp |
| CCC | 63.1% | 15.8% | 21.1% |
| CSU | 84.2% | 07.9 | 7.9 |
| UC | 97.4 | 0 | 2.6 |

*Note.* From *The Academic Worthiness of ESL Courses in the California Community Colleges as Indicated by Credit Status* by (Garlow, 1995).

[a] $n = 148$, [b] $n = 76$

More ESL courses satisfied English composition requirements for the associate degree because of two practices in community colleges. One practice is to allow an English course one level below freshman English to meet composition requirements for the associate degree. The other practice is that some colleges offer a nontransfer associate degree for students who want to earn a degree with an emphasis on major or occupational courses rather than general education courses and who have no plans to earn a baccalaureate degree. Such a degree might include both transferable and nontransferable courses.

Only nine courses were listed in college catalogs which transferred to the UC but not, apparently, to the CSU. These courses all transferred as electives.

Seventy-six courses met associate degree requirements and transferred both to the CSU and UC. Again there was inconsistency as to how credits could be applied at different institutions. All ESL courses, except those which were equivalent to freshman English, were applied to the baccalaureate degree as electives at the UC.

To summarize, then, approximately one third of community college credit ESL courses may be considered to meet the standards for college credit set forth in Title 5. However, fewer than half of these courses have been designated as transferable. Credit for most courses in all segments was applied to the degree as elective credit, but credit for writing courses was more likely than credit for other kinds of courses to be applied as general education-breadth credit. All courses which transferred to the CSU and UC received more general education credit at the community college level than they did at the CSU and UC. More courses transferred to the CSU than to the UC, perhaps, at least in part, because the community colleges prepare the lists of transferable courses to the CSU, whereas the president's office prepares the lists for the UC. Few courses were explicitly linked by notations in the catalogs to a hierarchy of English courses. More ESL courses satisfied composition requirements at community colleges than they did at the CSU or UC and more satisfied composition requirements at the CSU than at the UC.

## Discussion and Implications

Where do California's course standards for community colleges and articulation policies and procedures leave Fariba and her fellow students in their quest to attain their educational goals efficiently? Their routes to achieving the linguistic proficiency and the skills in English needed to earn an associate degree or to transfer are very different, depending on the community college they enter. There is great inconsistency and diversity in the kinds of credit that may be awarded to the very wide variety of ESL courses. If ESL courses were uniformly viewed as English courses by all community colleges, then only those courses considered to be at the level of freshman composition or one level below would be granted degree credit. Since this is not the case and slightly more than one third of the courses can be applied toward an associate degree, baccalaureate degree, or both, institutions are not applying criteria in the Title 5 regulations in a consistent way. Thus, a variety of courses may be given college level credit in one community college district while similar courses in a neighboring district may not.

In addition, if ESL courses were defined as English courses, it would also make sense that only those ESL courses at the level of freshman composition would transfer. However, this is not the case. Courses identified by course prerequisites and graduation requirements as being one, two, or even three levels below freshman English transfer to the CSU, UC, or both. The fact that both the CSU and UC themselves have offerings of ESL courses makes it easier for the community college to argue that ESL courses should transfer.

What future course should ESL articulation efforts take? Nearly a decade ago, CCC and ESL professionals made recommendations to improve articulation which still make sense today. In 1988, the CSU ESL Workgroup made several recommendations concerning criteria and standards for granting baccalaureate and general education credit to ESL courses at the CSU and for accepting CCC ESL courses for transfer. The Workgroup also made this recommendation in its report:

> Efforts should continue to better articulate ESL course content and exit performance expectations among the postsecondary segments in order to facilitate coursework transfer. The California State University should play a lead role in regional and statewide conferences and projects designed to promote the more standard and efficient offering of competency-based ESL instruction in California. (California State University, Office of the Chancellor, 1988, p. 10)

In addition, the community college ESL task force recommended in 1985 that more uniform practices be facilitated "through the establishment of an ESL committee to review and correlate various language assessment instruments, recommend assessment and placement procedures and act as a clearinghouse for research on language testing conducted by local districts" (Petersen & Cepeda, p. 2). Toward this end, a group of ESL practitioners and assessment experts developed *ESL Placement Tests for Community Colleges: A User's Guide* (Farland & Cepeda, 1988). However, since that time, regulations to implement the California legislative mandate known as *matriculation* set out the policies and procedures for the evaluation of assessment instruments used in the colleges (California Community Colleges, Chancellor's Office 1995b). "Matriculation in the community colleges is a process that promotes and sustains credit students' efforts to achieve their educational goals" (California Community Colleges, Chancellor's Office, 1995b, p. 1). Now all placement tests must be

169

approved by the chancellor's office, and those tests which were reviewed and correlated in 1986 can no longer be used. The only commercially developed ESL test which has received full approval by the chancellor's office is the Combined English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA). Although many colleges now have locally developed assessments which are in some stage of review, none of them have been compared to each other. In addition, correlations have never been established between the assessments used at community colleges and those used at the CSU or UC. What has become of all of the work on articulation which has already taken place?

Recommendations and actions taken in the past to promote articulation should provide at least a starting point for current efforts. In view of the diversity of content and credit designations at the various institutions in all segments, the only realistic way to articulate ESL courses seems to be through widely communicated, clearly stated expectations. These need to include concrete examples of student work that demonstrate the linguistic and academic proficiency required for a particular level. Ideally, assessments should be available which can be used at all institutional levels to measure both kinds of proficiency. These ideas were part of the recommendations made in previous reports on ESL mentioned above. Descriptions of levels of proficiency and examples of level-appropriate student work are available (see Browning, this volume); however, what is lacking is the means to disseminate information and to achieve uniform practices.

ESL practitioners at all levels have developed services for their students which they have tried to match to their students' needs and the requirements which are imposed by their institutions and systems. These services may do much to help students reach their educational, vocational, and personal goals. In addition, faculty in various parts of the state have made attempts to improve articulation across segments; however, up to now, the work of these groups has not widely affected articulation practices statewide. Without the cooperative financial and organizational support of the various segments, the chances of ESL professionals themselves being able to bring about a viable way of comparing or articulating courses within and across segments are slim. Meanwhile, students may continue to be served well by local programs but may be frustrated when moving or transferring to other institutions. ■

**Endnotes**

1. AB1725 was passed in 1988 and placed in law recommendations of the Commission for the Review of the Master Plan for Higher Education which were contained in its report *The Challenge of Change: A Reassessment of the Community Colleges*. Concerns about the educational needs of California's population and the

extent to which the CCC, CSU, and UC were meeting them had given rise to legislation (1984, SB1570-Neilson-ch. 1507) which established the Commission. At the same time SB2064 (1984-Stiern-ch.1506) mandated a special Community College Reassessment Study as the Commission's first priority.

2. Title 5 is the part of the California Code of Regulations which governs the administration of education in California. The California Code of Regulations emanates from over 200 agencies to implement California law.

3. The standards are set forth in §55002 (a) through (d), §55805.5 and §84711(a)(1-9) of Title 5.

4. This issue arose because 57 colleges offered ESL only under the credit program and might not have the option of offering them as noncredit classes since in some of these colleges' districts, noncredit offerings were the sole purview of the K-12 districts. The concern centered on the ability of colleges to meet the demand for ESL instruction throughout the state. Students might not continue to be served unless the courses at these colleges met, at a minimum, the standards in Title 5 for credit courses that would not apply to the associate degree.

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The CATESOL Journal

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# Is Remediation an Articulation Issue?

Recent recommendations and proposals[1] at various levels of education throughout the state and country have been based on the assumption that students should be "prepared" before entering a particular segment of the educational system, that no level should provide remediation. These proposals claim that students are underprepared largely because their previous education did not prepare them; in other words, their teachers failed to give them the skills and knowledge necessary for education at the next level. Inherent in all these arguments is the belief that if we could just articulate what outcomes students need to enter each level, then we could hold educators (and their students) accountable through assessment. Those that do not measure up will not proceed. However, if we examine the assumptions about learners and the teaching/learning dialectic on which these proposals are based, we come to a different conclusion. The cause is not in the victims (students and teachers), but in the very process of acquiring academic literacy within the educational infrastructure. This paper will examine the assumptions underlying current proposals to reduce or eliminate remedial education and the directions for future articulation. I will confine the discussion to the teaching of reading and writing and mostly to articulation between K–12 and the California State University (CSU) and Community Colleges and the CSU since that is my own area of greatest knowledge. However, much of the argument is applicable to other segments and other fields (such as mathematics), and articulation between other segments of the educational system.

## Assumptions Underlying Remediation

### Myth 1: Remedial Needs Are New

If we examine remedial education in the United States, we find that it has a long history. In the early 19th century and before, U.S. university curricula focused on language, usually the classics. By the late 19th century,

science, engineering and business were being incorporated into the undergraduate curriculum. At the same time, students entering the universities came from a wider range of high schools and possessed less intimate knowledge of the texts that were then considered necessary for an educated American. In other words, the universities considered the students unprepared for the reading and writing expected for university entrance. University educators responded by blaming the high schools:

> Attention has been directed of late to the lamentable condition of English instruction in the secondary schools. ... That English is difficult to teach follows from the ese [sic] with which both teacher and pupil may shirk the English lesson. The instructor has a smattering of the subject; the pupil thinks that he knows all about it. Each is prone to contemn [sic] what appears to be easy.
>
> But the community in general is awakening to the fact that the young do not speak, write, and read their mother-tongue correctly; that they neither know nor appreciate English literature: and the Universities are convinced that better training in secondary English studies is demanded by the interests of higher education. (Gayley & Bradley, 1894, p. 5)

In establishing college entrance examination standards, the universities further instructed schools about just what they should teach:

> At its conference in 1892, the Committee of Ten recommended that "a total of five periods a week for four years be devoted to the various aspects of English studies." ... The Committee reasserted what was becoming the popular view of educators, that the study of English could become "the equal of any other studies in disciplinary or developing power." In 1894, representatives to the National Conference on Uniform Entrance Requirements drafted a list of texts to be set for college entrance examinations in English ... The lists of books drafted by the conference not only gave definition to college English as a literary enterprise, but compelled the secondary schools to conform to that definition. The topics for the entrance examinations "were announced in advance and had a way of dictating the preparatory school curriculum for the year." (Graff, 1987, p. 99)

With an increase in entrance standards, universities quickly realized that they would need placement examinations and remedial courses. Francis J. Child, for whom Harvard created the first Professorship of English "...bitterly resented the time he had to spend correcting student compositions" (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1987, p. 2), despite the rigorous entrance requirement in English composition. The Harvard model of freshman composition was born—with its focus on literary examples as models for student texts. The University of California established the Examination in Subject A in 1898 and by 1902 a course in Subject A was established for those who failed the exam, initially for special students and then for engineering and commerce students, and ultimately, as it is today, for all undergraduates in 1907.

Within the CSU, the liberalization of the undergraduate curriculum in the 1970s, especially general education, resulted in concerns about students' preparedness in reading, writing and mathematics—both at entrance to the CSU and at graduation. Thus, after lengthy debate, the CSU trustees instituted the English Placement Test (EPT) in fall 1977 and the Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR) in 1978. Since history showed that instituting a test did not guarantee that students met the entrance requirement, the legislature also provided a supplement to campus budgets to provide additional help to students who did not demonstrate mastery of basic writing skills. This special allocation, Basic Writing Skills, which is still provided to campuses, was designed to reduce class size and so provide greater personal attention to meet students' developmental writing needs.

In the early 1980s, once again the public and legislators were concerned about the "problems afflicting American Education" (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983, p. iii). This concern resulted in the federal government's report "Nation at Risk" (1983), and, in California, in the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) 1984 report "Promises to Keep: Remedial Education in California's Public Colleges and Universities." The report made recommendations designed to reduce remedial instruction during the period of 1985 to 1990. The CSU's plan to reduce the need for remedial education included additional funding to provide intensive instruction for first-time freshmen with serious developmental needs in writing and mathematics, a program called the Intensive learning Experience (ILE).

Thus, we can see that the current claim that students are underprepared is one that educators and politicians have made for decades. The question is not so much one of whether students are less prepared than in previous generations but more what they are unprepared for and whether the segments they are entering are prepared for them.

**Myth 2: Most Underprepared Students Need Remediation**

Remediation is usually defined as "instruction below the level appropriate for the educational level of the student. It is distinguished from 'developmental' instruction, defined as classes for students who arrive at CSU without full exposure to instruction in preparatory college English and mathematics due to disadvantaged backgrounds and in need of first-time instruction in the necessary skills" (Community College League of California, 1995, p. 1). With the growing number of language minority students in California, both those for whom English is not a first language and those who speak a dialect other than standard academic English, more students are entering each segment with language proficiencies "below the appropriate level." However, these students are developmental, not remedial. They are still acquiring new knowledge and skills in a new variety of English—academic English. For example, English is not the native language of many students entering the CSU as freshmen and transfer students (conservatively 40–50%). The entering freshmen have graduated in the top third of their high schools because they have mastery over the content areas, yet their English language skills are still developing. Research indicates it takes from seven to 10 years (Collier, 1989) for such ESL students to acquire the academic language to reach parity with their native English-speaking peers. Many of them have simply not had the time or exposure to learn academic English before they graduate from high school. Others arrive as young adults, without high school graduation in this country but with varying levels of education from their home countries, and take classes at community colleges, where they learn both content and the English language. But again, most have simply not been in an English-speaking environment for sufficient time to develop the academic English they need for a four-year degree (Murray, Nichols, & Heisch, 1992). Additionally, many have not become members of a literacy community that supports and extends their literacy (Murray & Nichols, 1992).

In addition to the ESL issue, other factors create a cohort of developmental students at various segments. Many students are the first in their family to attend college, for example, often coming from minority populations that are under-represented in higher education. While English is their primary language, they may speak a dialect different from that of the schools. Much as African-American English represents an automonous dialect of English, the nonstandard varieties of English used by many immigrant children and youth are characterized by their own linguistic rules and conventions. These students will also need assistance if they are to acquire academic English.

For both ESL and dialect students, because of different cultural assumptions and experiences, the university and its ways of thought are new. The university is unprepared for what these students bring with them. The difficulty of bridging this gap is addressed in Heath's (1983) seminal study of three Piedmont communities, which demonstrated how students whose home language practices differed from those of the middle-class school were excluded from the academic literacy community. This exclusion is particularly evident in the examinations we use as gatekeepers. Students who do well in their chosen field of study may fail to meet the standards we have set to measure their writing proficiency, standards that reflect only one set of values (Johns, 1991); we then label them as remedial. "We owe it to our culturally and linguistically diverse students to recognize the values that permeate our tests and to decide which of these values are basic—and which are not—to determining writing competency" (Johns, 1991, p. 396).

Thus, what many of these students need is not remediation but full access to the developmental process of learning to read and write for academic purposes.

**Myth 3: In Previous Generations, Immigrants Learned English Quickly**

One of the most frequently heard myths about the rate at which ESL students acquire English is that previous generations of immigrants learned English much more quickly that do current immigrants. Histories of immigration clearly show that previous immigrants also took many years to acquire English. But, in previous generations, jobs that did not require a high level of English skills were plentiful. (For example, Califorina fed and clothed miners and built railroads using Chinese immigrant labor.) So, then-recent immigrants could quickly fit into the workplace—albeit mostly in low paying, manual labor (TESOL, 1996), or, at a time when corner stores were the norm rather than discount warehouses, in their own businesses.

Immigrants today find themselves in considerably different circumstances. The United States now has more jobs in the service sector and in the information industry, in which high levels of English language skills are required. Low-paying manual jobs are becoming scarcer, and even recent immigrants require an education to develop the skills necessary for an independent life. Thus, we find large numbers of recent immigrants with still-developing English language skills entering our community college, adult school, and university classes seeking improved language and job-related skills.

The other aspect of this myth is the supposed reluctance of this generation of immigrants to learn English. This myth survives, despite the long waiting lists for ESL classes in almost every urban center in California. It

persists largely because these immigrants are attending our classes rather than remaining invisible at their work sites in a cannery or foundry earning the minimum wage. As they seek to acquire the English they need for higher skilled jobs, they become visible.

**Myth 4: Oral Fluency Reflects Literacy**

Another assumption that has a powerful negative effect on the literacy development of both ESL and dialect learners is that oral fluency is an indicator of academic literacy. Extensive research (see Collier 1989 for a summary of this research) shows that ESL learners take from five to 10 years to achieve the same levels of proficiency in academic English as native speakers, but acquire competence in oral language for everyday use in two to three years. Yet, K–12 schools often move students from ESL or bilingual programs based solely on oral language assessments (see Dunlap & Fields, this volume). Thus students with still-developing English literacy skills find themselves submerged in academic language. Their difficulties are compounded because, once mainstreamed, they are instructed by teachers with no background in how to teach ESL literacy. These students then enter the community college system or a four-year college with limited proficiency in academic literacy.

## Future Directions

It is clear from the above discussion that students—immigrants and dialect speakers—will continue to arrive at the schoolhouse door needing instruction in English, and especially academic English. In the last century, colleges adopted instructional solutions that sought to impose standards on entering college students and thereby on the high schools. Ironically, what ultimately happened was the development of university English departments as we know them today—no longer considered remedial, but essential elements of a liberal education. If we learn anything from the past, it should be that we promote instructional solutions that neither blame the victim (the students) nor their previous education. If we want an educated workforce and citizenry, if we want a nation of information workers, if we want to be competitive in the global marketplace, then literacy education must be given as high a priority as science and math were in response to the Russian launching of Sputnik. This means acknowledging the language skills that all students bring with them to the classroom—in English and other languages. It means providing an educational infrastructure that supports English literacy acquisition. This obviously requires better articulation among different segments. However, articulation which truly addresses the language needs of California's (and the United States') diverse population

must be based on an understanding of how people acquire languages and literacy, not on myths. Such an understanding includes considering the flawed assumptions I have discussed above, but it also requires an understanding of the institutional factors that impact student learning.

Our educational infrastructure is so flawed that teachers in all segments are asked to do the impossible—be parents, counselors, role models, and, perhaps, in the time remaining, educators—and with an increasingly diverse student population. Class sizes do not allow teachers to respond to student writing in the ways we know facilitate student learning. Writing instruction requires intensive practice writing to a variety of audiences in a variety of genres with extensive opportunities for feedback from the instructor and opportunities to revise (see Reid 1995). Language education does not occur in isolation; yet often language learners are taught English separately from content instruction, and ESL educators are marginalized, having little interaction with faculty in other disciplines. The English language education of students is a lifelong exercise and is the responsibility of all educators. ESL professionals have expertise that needs to be shared with colleagues, but our institutions provide little, if any, opportunity for such dialogue. Instead, ESL and English faculty are expected to "fix" students' English through one or two courses.

Articulation between different segments is important, but that alone will not help our students develop the knowledge and skills they need for study in another segment—at least, not if we define articulation as the setting of outcome standards across segments. Such articulation ignores the educational backgrounds of our students and the educational infrastructure where teaching and learning takes place. What we need is collaboration among segments to change the assumptions of policy makers. We need to educate policy makers so they understand what it is like to arrive in California at the age of 15, not speaking or writing English, but with other talents and skills that will allow the person to become an engineer or computer professional. We need to work together to explode the myths about second language learning and teaching. Then, we can work on articulating pedagogical practices and structures that maximize the potential for teaching and learning—across and within segments. ■

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# University of California Responses to the Needs of ESL Students: 1983–1996

Articulation, or the movement of students across the segmental lines of high school and community college into the University of California (UC) system has been of major interest and concern, historically as well as currently, to faculty and administrators in all sectors of public education in California. As the segment of higher education designated by the state legislature (through the Master Plan) to work with the top one eighth of high school graduates in the state, UC is well aware that its entrance policies and requirements have enormous impact on both the types and content of courses offered in other sectors of the public education system in California. The level of preparation of the students who are preparing for UC admission, as well as the special needs of particular groups of students who enter either as freshmen or as transfers, in turn, affect programs offered on UC campuses once these students are accepted into the UC system. It is within these contexts that the following question is posed:

> *How has the University of California in recent years been dealing with the challenges posed by the increasing numbers of nonnative speakers (NNS) of English admitted to the system, especially those who are California residents?*

The answer: In a variety of ways—albeit somewhat differently on each of the eight general campuses offering both undergraduate and graduate-level work (i.e., Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, Los Angeles, Riverside, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, and San Diego).[1]

Despite local variations within the UC system, however, there are statewide set policies and procedures which all campuses follow. This

update reports recent UC systemwide (i.e., statewide) activities and responses to meeting the needs of English as a second language (ESL) students, both after as well as before entrance to the university. These efforts are aimed at helping such students perform successfully on any general campus and have involved the following:

(a) work with all the UC campus ESL program directors to ensure that educationally sound ESL programs are provided for NNS on all general campuses;

(b) work with the UC statewide Subject A Examination Committee to ensure that the reading prompt used in this required two-hour essay examination, written after acceptance to UC but prior to initial enrollment on a campus as a freshman, is accessible to nonnative speakers of English (NNS) and, additionally, is graded consistently and appropriately within the scoring guide used to evaluate the writing of native speakers of English (see Appendix A);

(c) work with the UC statewide Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) in shaping entrance policies, especially for freshmen, which will help prepare NNS to handle the high level language demands of UC (which, as noted, is directed by the California Master Plan to admit only students from the top 12.5% of graduates from all high schools in the state).

## Background

To understand the statewide activities and actions reported here and how they were generated, the governance system within the UC system must be explained briefly. The University of California has a somewhat unique system of "shared governance" whereby permanent faculty along with administrative officers jointly govern in academic matters, determining, for example, the credit-worthiness of courses, the approval of curricula and degree programs, the criteria for student admissions, the granting of faculty tenure, and so forth.

On each of the nine UC campuses, all local tenured and tenure-track (i.e., permanent) faculty are organized through a campus academic senate and share governance on academic issues with their local campus administration (i.e., the chancellor and staff). Such work is accomplished largely by academic senate committees, which are composed of and chaired by academic senate members who have been appointed to committee service by a campus Committee on Committees, elected annually by the tenure-track faculty at each campus (i.e., by the academic senate members).

In addition, there is a parallel statewide structure whereby tenured faculty, representing each of the nine campuses, are appointed to serve on

a statewide Academic Council and its systemwide committees. These groups work with the statewide administration (i.e., the Office of the President) on issues involving systemwide academic criteria, educational policies, and so forth.

Working within these structures has been essential to propose action and, often, to promote understanding within the UC system (both on individual campuses and systemwide) regarding NNS/ESL issues. Unfortunately, there are very few ESL-oriented tenured faculty to look after these important, but nonteaching or research, responsibilities. This is critical in that all but two ESL program directors/coordinators and virtually all ESL instructors in the UC system are on nontenured, short-term appointments, so academic senate avenues are not open to their participation in the making or shaping of academic policies affecting ESL/NNS students. This situation, plus the need to go through the sometimes lengthy maneuvers UC institutional processes most typically involve, has often proven frustrating. Again, unfortunately, this has been especially so in dealing with many of the repercussions of the steady annual increase in the NNS/ESL population enrolling at UC in recent years.

Until the early 1980s, most NNS students who entered the UC system needing further English language development found that help in programs originally designed to meet the needs of "foreign" students (i.e., NNS of English who had been educated in their home countries, entering the US on student visas usually to do graduate work). However, as in all other segments of the public educational system in the state, there has been a rise in the numbers of NNS students who are immigrant California residents and educated in California public schools (often referred to as ESL students), now entering UC as undergraduates.

On particular campuses, the rise has been especially sharp. To cite the experience of only two campuses, for instance, in 1994–95, 32.1% of freshmen admissions at UC Davis came from non-English speaking homes (compared with only 20.3% in 1988). At UC Irvine in the past three years, over 60% of entering freshmen were born outside the U.S. and speak a language other than English at home; in 1996 this population had risen to 64%! Other UC campuses have also experienced increases that are quite similar.

### The 1983 CPEC Report "Promises to Keep"

Institutional responses to the admission of increasing numbers of ESL students into the UC system, plus exploration of ways to meet their special needs once they are on a particular campus, have been slow and sporadic. In fact, "the ESL problem" was not acknowledged systemwide before the

appearance in 1983 of the seminal California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) document, "Promises to Keep: Remedial Education in California's Public Colleges and Universities" (issued as Report 83.2). The report suggested future problems and options facing the three segments of higher education in the state (the CCC, CSU, and UC systems). To represent the CPEC report's perspective on ESL instruction in California higher education in general and at UC in particular, we cite the three following excerpts:

- One major research campus of the university [UC] has found that permanent residents who have resided in the United States on the average of four years now comprise about two-thirds of the students in its ESL program, having replaced foreign students as the majority. The failure rate in its ESL courses jumped dramatically during 1979–80 from 15% to 28% and remained almost as high for 1980–81...the topic deserves further study for all campuses and all three segments (p. 43).

- Both university administrators and respondents to the Commission survey on two university campuses noted that they do not consider ESL remedial, a viewpoint that is widely held across all segments. One campus coordinator urged a distinction between the varying levels of ESL offered on that campus as some are extremely basic and others equivalent to Subject A (p. 43).

- The questions arising from the infusion of English as a Second Language students into California's colleges and universities appear fundamentally different from those engendered by the other basic skill areas. Although only a portion of ESL may be considered remedial and thus have bearing on this study, the entire ESL issue carries import for all three segments (p. 108).

This 1983 CPEC report recommended that a careful study of ESL issues by all three segments of higher education in California be undertaken to develop a "coherent philosophy and practical strategy to meet both current and future needs" (p. 108).

**The 1989 UCUPRE Report on ESL**

In spring 1985, prompted by the CPEC report, but also in part by data gathering in the CCC and CSU systems as well as by the Intersegmental Coordinating Council, the chair of the standing UC systemwide Academic Senate Committee on Undergraduate Preparatory and Remedial Education (UCUPRE) appointed an ad hoc UC ESL subcommittee. The charge was

to meet, gather data, and prepare a report addressing the following questions:

1. What should be the entrance and exit level competencies for ESL courses at UC?

2. How and when should students in need of such courses be identified?

3. What content of ESL courses should be eligible for baccalaureate credit and what content should not?

4. What provisions should be made for ESL students to assist them in preparing to satisfy the University's Subject A (i.e., English composition) requirement?[2]

In March, 1989, after meeting nine times over three academic years, the ad hoc ESL subcommittee submitted a report on the status of ESL students and ESL programs at UC to UCUPRE. The recommendations of the subcommittee's report were as follows:

(a) that UC academic senate and UC systemwide administration acknowledge that nonnative speakers of English constitute and will continue to constitute a significant segment of the students at UC by ensuring that educationally sound programs are provided on all general campuses for nonnative speakers of English;

(b) that UC systemwide administration provide the leadership to ensure that each campus meets its educational and legal responsibilities to the immigrant ESL students it admits as well as to oversee ESL-related matters dealing with admission, transfer, and articulation;

(c) that UCUPRE continue to appoint to the Subject A Examination Subcommittee as voting members one or more recognized ESL specialists and continue to include examples of strong and weak ESL compositions, which are described as such, in its Subject A Examination information booklets;

(d) that each general campus fulfill its responsibilities to the ESL students it admits by appointing a full-time qualified ESL specialist to be the ESL director/coordinator and by providing the necessary financial and administrative support for that specialist to carry out and/or advise on the following tasks:

> (a) develop a long-term ESL policy that articulates the recommendations of this report in a manner appropriate to the size and needs of the local ESL population;

(b) hire and support for the long-term a support staff of ESL professionals needed to assess and meet the requirements of the local ESL population;

(c) work cooperatively with those in charge of ongoing composition programs—or with any other instructional unit where cooperation or assistance is needed;

(d) monitor and track the progress of all ESL students, especially with regard to composition requirements,

(e) meet at least once a year (preferably twice) with ESL program directors from the other UC campuses to discuss common problems, issues, solutions, innovations, etc.;

(f) participate as appropriate in the assessment of the oral proficiency of ESL/EFL students serving as teaching assistants and in the offering of instruction in oral communication and pronunciation for such students as needed.

These recommendations were subsequently approved by the statewide UCUPRE and forwarded to the systemwide University of California Academic Council (the executive committee of the systemwide academic senate), where it was negatively evaluated and put aside: The recommendations were viewed as too costly to implement given that ESL was not judged a high priority. Little attention was given to the report other than copying it and sending it to local campuses nearly two years later.

### Subsequent Outcomes of the ESL Report's Recommendations: Work With Campus ESL Programs and Statewide Subject A Testing

Despite the negative evaluation of the ESL report by the Academic Council, there have been some successful outcomes. First, since 1994 all UC ESL program directors now meet once a year under the sponsorship of UCOPE to: (a) discuss issues of mutual interest and concern; and (b) forward an annual report on ESL concerns to the University of California Committee on Preparatory Education(UCOPE), the current incarnation of UCUPRE.[3]

A second positive outcome of the ESL report involves work with the statewide Subject A Examination. ESL programs have official representation on the UC Subject A Examination Committee. Furthermore, ESL specialists from all campuses are annually appointed readers of this university-wide exam and make final pass/fail decisions on papers presenting second language errors or problems. Also, the annual published compilation of sample essays graded at each of the six levels described in detail on the UC

Subject A Scoring Guide (see Appendix A) includes papers with evidence that the writer is a nonnative speaker of English. This booklet is distributed annually to high schools across the state to guide English teachers in helping both NS and NNS to develop the writing skills needed to do successful UC-level work. Unfortunately, the results of the Subject A Examination over time indicate a steady increase in the proportion of NNS who are admitted to UC and who fail this test. In 1987, 6.7% of the newly admitted freshmen who took the first university-wide Subject A Examination failed and were designated as ESL; however, in 1994, 12.5% of the admitted test takers who failed the test were so designated, i.e., an increase of 89%. Such an increase underscores the need for adequate and informed ESL instruction for NNS students prior to entrance to UC.

### Outcomes of Work with the UC Academic Senate Committee on Admissions (BOARS)

In the last three years BOARS, the UC systemwide academic senate committee on admissions, has responded in several ways to address the language-specific needs created by the influx of ESL students into the system. BOARS actions and activities have, by and large, been prompted by Tippy Schwabe from UC Davis. Because of her campus service as a member and/or cochair of the UC Davis Admissions Committee (1989 to the present), she was appointed to BOARS in 1991 and served into 1995.

Soon after appointment to BOARS, Schwabe asked for UC review of the English and foreign language admission requirements vis a vis preparing NNS high school students for UC-level work. During her service, she documented the needs of these students and prepared guidelines whenever requested (such as the possible specifications for an advanced-level high school ESL language/reading/writing course for which elective credit might be given—see Appendix B).

Almost all such policy proposals and guidelines are first reviewed by either the BOARS Subcommittee on Freshman Admissions or the Subcommittee on Transfer Admissions before being considered in a full BOARS session, a process which often takes two to three years. This was the case with the following BOARS policy decisions on criteria affecting immigrant ESL student admissions to UC (and attendant systemwide activities handled by the Office of the President)—all made since the presentation of the 1989 UC ESL report. Briefly, these actions are:

1. BOARS reaffirmed that in meeting the *a-f* subject requirements (See Appendix A in Brinton et al., in this volume for the *a-f* requirements), one of the four required English courses (the *b* requirement) can be an ESL course—usually, although not always, the ninth grade course—and suggest-

ed that high schools guide ESL students to take advantage of an ESL course at this level because of the particular content emphases addressing their language needs.

2. BOARS voted (June, 1993) to accept a second high school ESL course as one of the two required elective courses (the *f* requirement) provided it is an advanced-level ESL course and suggested that this would be an appropriate junior or senior year course for ESL learners to further develop language skills needed to handle UC academic demands successfully. Documents presented to BOARS to facilitate their consideration of this action included the following two items:

(a) a detailed course description of such an advanced-level high school ESL course was reviewed by BOARS and forwarded to appropriate admissions personnel in the UC Office of the President for use when evaluating whether a course from a school district meets the advanced-level standing of this *f* elective requirement. (See Specification 2 in Appendix B for this description).

(b) the descriptions of the English requirement(s) used in many UC documents (including pages C3, C4, and C5 of the widely used *Quick Reference for Counselors*) were rewritten to reflect these actions and approved by BOARS.

These actions and activities, it is hoped, will help to alter the perception, often held by both ESL students and their high school counselors, that ESL coursework is entrance- or low-level work and so to be avoided—especially by UC-bound ESL students—in favor of taking "higher level" mainstream English courses. These, unfortunately, do not always address the language needs of ESL students. There was hope, too, as noted, that the *f* elective course might serve as a bridge course in the last year or two in preparing students to meet the higher (even than high school senior year) standards and demands of UC. Further, it was felt that detailing course content might prompt high school English programs across the state to include such specified work for UC-bound ESL students when taking any English course intended to meet the *b* requirement.[4]

These suggestions need to be monitored within the UC system in the coming months (possibly years) to assure implementation. We must also ensure correct understanding of UC policies and practices in this area. This can be accomplished via professional discussions, the work of the ESL subcommittee, and through articles published in appropriate publications.

3. BOARS voted (May, 1993) to accept content courses taught in a language other than English which fulfill any of the *a-f* requirements (except *b* English) and which meet UC (and California) curricular content standards.

Since content courses taught in other languages are accepted for UC admission from students educated in non-English speaking countries as well as from those coming from schools in the US that teach all subject content in a foreign language (such as a French lycee), it was reasoned that content work taught in a high school in California by content-qualified, accredited bilingual teachers should be similarly acceptable. High schools offering such coursework are reporting a turnaround in attitudes and performance by L2 students who had believed they could never meet the academic requirements and qualifications for UC admission.

**Issues for the Future**

In addition to these recent actions and activities taken systemwide at UC (by BOARS and the Office of the President) to aid immigrant ESL students in entering the UC system and to help them perform successfully, there are other issues to examine in response to Recommendation 2 in the 1989 UC ESL Report, that is, "to provide leadership in overseeing matters dealing with admissions, transfer, and articulation."

1. One relevant question is how the newly developed English Language Proficiency Test offered by the College Board might (and/or should/should not) be used in the UC admissions process with respect to nonnative speakers who have resided in the U.S. for two or more years. (Currently nonnative speakers of English who have been in the U.S. fewer than two years must present a TOEFL score—the Educational Testing Service Test of English as a Foreign Language—as part of the admissions process). Before any decisions are made about the test, it needs to be investigated to see how it might be used to assess ESL students' skills.

2. A question specific to articulation, one needing immediate attention, involves current collaborative interactions between the UC system and California high schools on changes in high school curricula across the state. What effects are such changes having on UC-bound ESL students? How (and how well) are the language development needs of these NNS met in restructured, innovative cross-content curricula? A related question also needs to be explored: How well (or not) do NNS fare when their work is evaluated and graded in group projects and through portfolio assessments?

3. There are also important articulation issues involving the UC campuses and community college ESL transfer students. Very frequently, ESL students, especially those who were not UC-eligible when graduating from high school, arrive on UC campuses from community colleges and are inadequately prepared to handle UC coursework successfully because of English language deficiencies. When tested upon entrance to UC (current-

ly done only at UCLA and UC Davis), ESL transfer students often demonstrate a measurable need for further language development, despite having successfully completed the one English composition course required for transfer (See Brinton, et al., this volume).

The current minimum admissions requirements and the optional, but highly recommended Intersegmental General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) listing (see Brinton et al., Appendix B, this volume), which govern transfer from community colleges to UC, require one transferable English composition course (to be raised to two courses beginning in fall, 1998). The admissions requirements additionally specify that as of fall, 1998 two English composition courses be required and that eight of a total of 56 units (to be increased to 60 units in 1998) can be ESL courses. In other words, eight units of ESL can be used as part of the general accumulation of the 56 general education units, but they do *not* substitute for the required English composition course(s). Importantly, as of fall 1998, not only must transfer students clear any deficiency in the *b* English four-unit requirement from high school; they must also complete two community college courses in English composition to be eligible for transfer to UC. ESL students at the community college level who continue to have problems using English grammar correctly and making appropriate lexical choices should ideally take the full number of permitted ESL courses before taking the two required transferable credit composition courses to strengthen their preparation for UC level work.[5]

## Concluding Observations

UC should be certain that immigrant ESL students are receiving appropriate and adequate language instruction while developing the necessary academic skills prior to entering—and once admitted to—the UC system. In order for ESL students to be able to handle UC work successfully, issues such as those raised in this paper need to be thoughtfully and thoroughly explored. This is especially important given that the University of California, as noted, in many ways sets standards for the preparatory work done by students in the state, both in high schools and in community colleges. In addition, the University is concerned with upholding the nationally recognized high standards of UC undergraduate degrees. ■

**Endnotes**

1. The ninth UC campus in San Francisco offers only graduate work in the medical sciences.

2. The ESL subcommittee that prepared this document consisted of six members: George Gadda (Los Angeles), June McKay (Berkeley), William Megenney (Riverside), Robin Scarcella (Irvine), Tippy Schwabe (Davis), and Marianne Celce-Murcia (Los Angeles), who served as chair.

3. This name change, it should be noted, removed the word *remedial* from this statewide committee which monitors, advises, and facilitates matters relating to all preparatory education—a change in official UC stance, which could signal either (a) recognition of UC's responsibility in meeting the needs of the students it admits, including ESL students, or (b) reflection of the growing statewide consensus that no remedial coursework should be offered in any four-year segment of higher education.

4. While the description in Appendix B suggests the level and type of course content appropriate for UC-bound immigrant students in a second high school ESL course taken just prior to UC entrance, it was also hoped that it might guide course content and skill building when only one ESL course, whenever taken, is offered in the high school program for this type of ESL student.

5. Also, beginning in 1998 *all* general education coursework must be completed at a community college prior to a student's transfer to UC, which is not currently the case.

## Appendix A

## UC Subject A Scoring Guide

In holistic reading, raters assign each essay to a scoring category according to its dominant characteristics. The categories below describe the characteristics typical of papers at six different levels of competence. All the descriptions take into account that the papers they categorize represent two hours of reading and writing, not a more extended period of drafting and revision.

**6** A *6* paper commands attention because of its insightful development and mature style. It presents a cogent response to the text, elaborating that response with well-chosen examples and persuasive reasoning. The *6* paper shows that its writer can usually choose words aptly, use sophisticated sentences effectively, and observe the conventions of written English.

**5** A *5* paper is clearly competent. It presents a thoughtful response to the text, elaborating that response with appropriate examples and sensible reasoning. A *5* paper typically has a less fluent and complex style than a *6*, but does show that its writer can usually choose words accurately, vary sentences effectively, and observe the conventions of written English.

**4** A *4* paper is satisfactory, sometimes marginally so. It presents an adequate response to the text, elaborating that response with sufficient examples and acceptable reasoning. Just as these examples and this reasoning will ordinarily be less developed than those in *5* papers, so will the *4* paper's style be less effective. Nevertheless, a *4* paper shows that its writer can usually choose words of sufficient precision, control sentences of reasonable variety, and observe the conventions of written English.

**3** A *3* paper is unsatisfactory in one or more of the following ways. It may respond to the text illogically; it may lack coherent structure or elaboration with examples; it may reflect an incomplete understanding of the text or the topic. Its prose is usually characterized by at least one of the following: frequently imprecise word choice; little sentence variety; occasional major errors in grammar and usage, or frequent minor errors.

**2** A *2* paper shows serious weaknesses, ordinarily of several kinds. It frequently presents a simplistic, inappropriate, or incoherent response to the text, one that may suggest some significant misunderstanding of the text or the topic. Its prose is usually characterized by at least one of the following:

simplistic or inaccurate word choice; monotonous or fragmented sentence structure; many repeated errors in grammar and usage.

**1** A *1* paper suggests severe difficulties in reading and writing conventional English. It may disregard the topic's demands, or it may lack any appropriate pattern of structure or development. It may be inappropriately brief. It often has a pervasive pattern of errors in word choice, sentence structure, grammar, and usage.

**The *E* Designation**

The *E* designation indicates that a nonpassing essay includes significant linguistic or rhetorical features characteristic of the writing of nonnative speakers of English. Those features contribute to the essay's nonpassing score, usually by limiting its coherence or demonstrating inadequate command of English grammar and usage.

Any reader can assign the *E* designation in combination with a score of 3, 2, or 1. Papers designated *E* receive subsequent readings by ESL specialists, who either confirm or do not confirm the previous reader's judgment. *E* designations confirmed by ESL specialists are reported to campus Subject A and ESL offices along with the papers' combined holistic scores. Campuses look carefully at these essays and at other available information to determine whether the writers should be placed in ESL courses.

You should assign the *E* designation to all nonpassing essays that exhibit significant linguistic or rhetorical features characteristic of the writing of nonnative speakers of English.

## Appendix B

### Possible Specifications for an Advanced-level High School ESL Language/Reading/Writing Course for Which *f* Elective Credit Might be Given re: UC Admission (prepared for use by BOARS by G.T. Schwabe, April, 1993)

1. Provide constant interfacing of reading and writing on age/grade-level appropriate concepts and themes with:
   (a) frequent in-class and out-of-class writing assignments (majority to be unassisted writing).
   (b) a mixture of short and long writing assignments but at least nine essays of 500 words (i.e., 4,500 words) during the course.
2. Increase ability to distinguish fact from opinion plus ability to identify and evaluate various types of evidence in analyzing expository writing.
3. Increase ability to develop and use various kinds of evidence in writing.
4. Develop skills in using authorities/outside sources as supporting evidence.
5. Develop recognition and use of external and internal coherence devices/strategies to establish cohesion in writing.
6. Further develop outlining, paraphrasing, and summarizing skills.
7. Further develop personal revising and editing skills plus extend experience in doing peer editing.
8. Continue explicit and systematic work in vocabulary development with specific attention given to vocabulary used in academic discourse.
9. Continue explicit work in grammar, giving particular emphasis to:
   (a) controlling verb forms accurately and correctly sequencing verb tenses in written discourse;
   (b) better understanding aspect as a function of verbs in English;
   (c) generating simple, complex, and compound sentence structures using subordinate and coordinate connectors correctly;
   (d) developing oral and written control of idioms, phrasal verbs, articles, etc.

10. Increase reading comprehension and proficiency by reading/reporting on a set number of books (possibly 10–15 per semester).

Similar specifications could be incorporated into an ESL/sheltered English course following the state curricular frameworks for 10th-, 11th-, and 12th- grade English. In such sheltered content courses, a further specification would be:

(a) ability to critique the literary genre presented in the curriculum.

The CATESOL Journal

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# Teaching Analytical Writing to ESL Students: A UCLA/High School Collaboration

How can high school students still in ESL classes stretch their abilities to prepare for the analytical reading and writing expected at the university level? For the past 10 years UCLA faculty and high school teachers in the greater Los Angeles area have collaborated on a curriculum and assessment project aimed at sharing teaching expertise and helping ESL high school students approach college-level reading and writing. The centerpiece of the program has been the UC Subject A exam, the writing placement exam that 12th-graders already accepted to a UC campus take in the late spring of their senior year. These 12th-graders have two hours to read a two-page passage and, on the spot, respond in writing to a question that taps their analytical abilities.

But while the purpose of the Subject A is to assess and place, our purpose in this university-schools collaboration is to make challenging materials and tasks accessible, to expand repertoires, to support and encourage. Through the years we've developed a process in which advanced- level ESL students, ninth- through 12th-graders, might take this same placement exam under nonexam conditions. As part of this process, ESL students work with their teachers for five to 10 days, engaging in reading and writing activities that make the passage fully accessible to them. Then they have two hours to write to the essay prompt. In one week's time students see their papers again—with comments crafted to help them revise. With the help of their teacher and peers, they work with the comments and produce a second and final draft. The goal is not only for the revisions to be improved versions, but for the students to have grown as writers in the process.

## How This Program Came to Be

Back in 1980 when local high schools asked UCLA to provide a model for university writing standards, we responded by visiting several 11th-grade English classrooms and discussing sample essays written to the Subject A exam. Students were given a copy of the holistic scoring rubric and were quickly able to assign the samples the appropriate score. Shortly afterwards, they wrote to another Subject A prompt and received scores and written comments for their own essays.

By 1982 we developed a more collaborative model. Twenty-six high school teachers and eight UCLA writing programs lecturers met for two weeks in the summer to read their 11th-grade students' Subject A essays, score them, and devise a model for commenting. This time we determined that the comments would be written for the purpose of helping students revise. After reading the research on commenting available at the time and drawing on the collective wisdom of the group, we produced guidelines for commenting that we all would follow.

By 1986 the second language student population in Los Angeles schools was increasing dramatically. One of our team leaders, Beth Winningham, had planned to have her 11th-grade class participate—but the first week in February her teaching assignment was changed. Now with her class of advanced ESL students, she wondered about their ability to participate. With just a few days to make up her mind, she decided to give them the opportunity. So, along with the native English-speaking (NS) participants, they read the passage and wrote within the two-hour time frame. Their papers were scored according to the rubric, and they received written comments to help them revise.

Fortunately, the written comments prevented the experience from being discouraging. But it was clear to us all that while our program model might have been fine for NS 11th-graders, it was clearly lacking for ESL students. And given the changing demographics, shouldn't we begin to pay more attention to students in the process of acquiring English? If these students were to become our focus, in what ways should the program change?

## Changes for Second Language Students

The following year our program invited both English and ESL teachers and their students to participate; and from 1988 to the present we've focused exclusively on second language students. Although the population we were serving changed, the ultimate goal remained the same: We hoped to give students a better sense of university expectations and strengthen their writing abilities. But while for NS 11th-graders our articulation model offered one push forward, for ESL students our program would

inevitably offer frustration rather than appropriate challenge. We decided on two major changes: (a) extending the reading-writing process and (b) building in visits to schools by UCLA undergraduates who had formerly attended ESL/bilingual classes in elementary or secondary school.

**Extending the Reading-Writing Process**

We've learned that it's not unusual for advanced ESL students to be unfamiliar with up to 30 words in the two-page reading that makes up the Subject A passage. In addition, idioms and familiarity with U.S. culture and history may not yet be part of their background knowledge. While we could have easily rewritten the passage to control vocabulary and to provide explanations of historical references, we decided against such a rewriting. We wanted students to experience the style of the passage intact and to become familiar with new words and their particular connotations. So we posed this question to our group: How can we make this passage accessible to high school ESL students? Then, working in small groups, we designed into-through-and beyond activities that teachers could draw from as they presented the reading to their students (see Gadda, Peitzman, & Walsh, 1988; Peitzman & Gadda, 1994).

*Into* activities—preliminary ways of introducing the students to the themes of the passage—might range from writing journal entries, discussing photographs from a particular historical era, or reading poems or other short pieces of literature. *Through* activities—ways of helping students make meaning from the passage—might begin with the teacher reading the passage aloud to the class. They might also include student activities such as constructing star diagrams that cluster important vocabulary, paraphrasing, holding class discussions or debates, and engaging in a variety of types of notemaking and writing activities. In many ways the *beyond* activity—ways of extending or applying information or concepts from the passage—is the Subject A prompt itself. Teachers also construct other culminating activities that could include letter writing, pairing the passage with a short story, or writing a silent dialogue together with another student.

While we elected not to rephrase the Subject A passage itself, we did finally decide to rephrase the actual essay question, which had confused many students. For example, the Subject A prompt for the passage "The Poets in the Kitchen" by Paule Marshall, read:

> To what extent do Paule Marshall's ideas about the importance of conversation for her mother and her mother's friends shed light on the uses of language in groups that you know? In responding to the ideas in this passage,

> you may choose to discuss functions of group talk that Marshall does not mention. To develop your essay, be sure to discuss specific examples drawn from your own experience, your observation of teachers, or your reading—including "The Poets in the Kitchen" itself.

Not only was the initial question syntactically difficult for the students, many could not understand the expression *shed light*. We rephrased the first two sentences of the original and kept the last intact:

> In what ways does Paule Marshall think that conversation was important for her mother and her mother's friends? Are those ways similar to the purposes for which people use language in groups that you know? Why or why not?

While almost any rephrasing may modify the question—in this case we miss the notion of *to what extent*—we were nonetheless satisfied that our ESL students were answering essentially the same question.

While we've retained our eight guidelines for commenting, we've amplified them for teachers of second language students.

In Figure 1 the four inset sentences represent additions we made in the year that both 11th-graders and ESL students participated. While many of the ESL essays were perceptive and well organized, a large number had errors in every line. We decided, for our first reading, that we would read over—or ignore—errors, in order to focus on content. And we found that, once decided, this was indeed something all of us could do.

The second item had to do with plagiarism. We found papers that had phrases, sentences and sometimes full paragraphs lifted from the original passage. After discussing this amongst ourselves, we agreed that the issue was not attempted deception. After all, everyone had a copy of the passage. Rather, it turned out that the analytical writing task was still beyond the reach of some students. Some may have understood the passage but didn't yet have enough of a lexical and stylistic repertoire to put their ideas in their own words. And of course, in some cultures, it is perfectly permissible to copy without quoting; students and professors do it all the time. It is a way of emulating the text and showing respect for the author. While our goal was to teach students that in the United States it is not proper or permissible to plagiarize, we did not feel it appropriate to display moral outrage.

**Figure 1**

## Guidelines for Commenting on ESL Students' Essays

- Skim the entire paper before writing comments.

*On your first reading, try to read over sentence-level errors.*

- Address the student by name.

- Begin by specifically stating a major strength of the paper and pinpointing the nature of major weaknesses.

*Treat cases of plagiarism with sensitivity*

- List text-specific questions/suggestions for change. Note paragraphs and sentences that work particularly well.

*Select only the most salient/persistent sentence-level errors to comment on.*

- Be supportive in tone.

- Phrase comments tentatively, where appropriate.

Be directive where appropriate, but not to the extent that the teacher-reader is doing all the problem solving.

*Pinpoint cases in which misreadings of background texts have occurred and explain the misreading.*

- Close with encouraging remarks.

The third guideline addition again focused on error. Most of our comments would be crafted to help students revise conceptually. Detailed written comments on correctness issues would not be the most effective way to help students. Nonetheless, we decided to point out errors if they recurred throughout the paper or if they were particularly important for students to note.

Finally, it became clear that students sometimes misread parts of the passage because they did not have sufficient knowledge of American culture. When this happened, we would explain the author's intended meaning in our comments.

### Visits to Schools by UCLA Students

During our small- and full-group discussions, it became clear that a sizable number of the 500 or so students who participated in the project each year did not yet have firm plans to go to college. It was also apparent that many of them had potential and promise. But they needed someone they could really identify with—someone closer to their peer group—to encourage them and help them believe in their abilities. What if UCLA students who had been ESL/bilingual students in Los Angeles schools could visit each classroom and talk about student life at the university? As a backdrop, they could also talk about their experiences in public school as ESL/bilingual students and their decision to go to college. And of course they would leave plenty of time for questions and answers.

The UCLA ESL service course coordinator, who was a member of our team, volunteered to find and coach second language UCLA students interested in visiting participating high school classrooms. These students would visit with the overt purpose of sharing their own high school to college experience and explaining how as second language learners they found the confidence to pursue a higher education. A more covert agenda was for these students to convince their high school peers that this was an attainable goal for them as well and that having English as their second language need not be a barrier. For the past several years we've considered these visits a highlight of the Analytical Writing program.

### Curriculum Packets

When collaboration works, all feel that they've accomplished more than they ever could have alone. We thought that if pooling all the classroom lessons designed for the Subject A passage was so satisfying, perhaps each small group could design into-through-and beyond activities around selected short stories and poems that pair well thematically and that would be appealing to the interests and abilities of advanced high school ESL stu-

dents. Then everyone could return home at the end of the four-month collaboration with some stunning additions to the next year's curriculum. While time was short, motivation was high. With the help of an experienced table leader—and some guidelines for selecting appropriate literature—the groups chose their pieces, brainstormed, and assigned each member activities to plan. By the last meeting the end of May everyone could take home approximately six literature-writing units for consideration.

## Nature of the Collaboration: Why It Works and Next Steps

The premise behind this UCLA-schools collaboration is that everyone brings expertise to the group. The leadership team itself is a combination of UCLA and high school teachers. UCLA group leaders are housed in three different departments: Center X within the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, UCLA's writing programs, and the department of TESL and applied linguistics. High school leaders are all California Writing Project fellows and include classroom ESL teachers and district ESL specialists. The rest of the group—the 20 to 30 teachers who sign up for the program each year—bring their own invaluable expertise. Dedicated professionals, they bring in-depth knowledge of their own students. They explain what these students already know and can do and search for ways to build on those abilities. They also share invaluable insights into the home cultures of their students.

Thus, no one has privileged knowledge. As director, I can bring insights from my years of directing the UCLA Writing Project. For years George Gadda, codirector of this collaboration, shared his knowledge of the UC Subject A Examination, for which he is chief reader. Lecturers in UCLA's department of TESL and Applied Linguistics bring years of experience working with UCLA undergraduate and graduate students. Our school site leaders bring intimate understandings of the high school ESL classroom plus an overview that comes with working for years with second language teachers in a variety of schools and districts.

As I look back on this multiyear program, it strikes me that what started as a one-way university-as-expert program has developed in exciting ways by becoming a true collaboration between university and high school teachers who share a common interest. The commenting model, the impetus to focus on ESL students, the realization that UCLA students might also have an important role to play, the addition of developing curriculum materials—these facets of the program were created because of ongoing conversations among the university and high school partners.

Our next steps are still unclear, but we know that we won't remain a

static program. This year we met at Pasadena City College instead of the UCLA campus so that teachers in the San Gabriel Valley would have an easier time participating. We've discussed starting a parallel project that focuses on middle school ESL students. The Subject A exam wouldn't quite do for sixth- to eighth-graders, so we'd need to find a new centerpiece. We've also discussed finding the time to publish the wonderful reading-writing lessons that have been created over the past five years. What we do know is that we'll continue our efforts to enrich the professional lives of all teachers involved and also provide in several small ways the extra attention that can make a difference for our ESL students.

**Endnotes**

1. The UCLA lecturers from the department of TESL and applied linguistics were Donna Brinton, Janet Goodwin, and Linda Jensen.

2. The high school leaders were Beth Winningham, Linda Sasser, Laura Ranks, and, new to the group, Adriana Reyes.

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The CATESOL Journal

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# Articulation or Collaboration?

In this paper, I want to demonstrate that change only occurs when faculty from across segments collaborate as equal partners. Articulation agreements, on the other hand, operate on the belief that if universities establish the standards they want their colleagues in community colleges or K–12 schools to meet, change will somehow occur. As an English as a second language (ESL) practitioner, I have found that collaborative work among different segments is more likely to result in equivalency of curricula and standards. Over several years, San José State University (SJSU) has worked with a number of regional community colleges on projects in which we examined similarities and differences among our language programs for language minority students with the goal of developing curriculum at participating institutions.

The first project,"Beyond Articulation: A Regional Approach to Course Planning and Content Mastery in Freshman Composition" (1987-8),[1] developed a fully elaborated syllabus for students unprepared for SJSU's upper division writing program (Graduate Writing Assessment Requirement [GWAR]), which consists of a writing screening test (Writing Skills Test [WST]) and an upper division writing workshop (100W) taught across the curriculum. The course developed is for students who fail the WST (primarily ESL students) and for any who know they are unprepared for upper division writing. The second project, "Common Assessment of Writing Skills in Second Level Composition Courses: A Model for Regional Planning" (1989-90)[2] examined the WST itself, assembling a team of faculty from SJSU and its service area. These faculty assessed the proposed American College Testing Computerized Assessment and Placement Programs (ACT CAPP) exam for possible use as SJSU's WST. Through this collaboration we were able to reach common agreement on the writing standards required of students entering upper division work at SJSU.

These two projects resulted in continuing dialogue between SJSU composition faculty and those in service area community colleges. From these dialogues we found that, while we had reached some agreement on common standards at the point of transfer, we had not looked at the other end of the curriculum—prefreshman composition (pre-1A), in particular courses for ESL students. Thus, in 1991 we engaged in another project, "ESL Curriculum Development for Prefreshman Composition,"[3] that focused on how best to prepare ESL students for college-level writing. There was and still is a pressing need to ensure adequate written communication skills among our foreign-born students because (a) they represent 33% of SJSU's student population (Murray, Nichols, & Heisch, 1992), and (b) they fail the WST at far higher rates than native English-speaking students. For example, 50% of Vietnamese fail compared with 5.7% of native English speakers (Murray & Nichols, 1992). Further, we saw a need to develop consistent entry-exit standards across community colleges and the CSU pre-freshman composition classes: Students transferring from a community college to SJSU and students who began as freshmen at SJSU should, we felt, have all reached the same proficiency level. We were especially concerned because many transfer students were failing the upper division writing test (WST) and being required to take additional classes at SJSU. At the same time, the Intersegmental Coordinating Council Curriculum and Assessment Cluster had recognized the variety among course offerings in the state's community colleges and begun to seek ways to articulate ESL standards across campuses.[4] Our project worked towards such articulation on a local level by addressing two issues—curriculum content and exit standards. In the limited space here, I will focus on this last project because it both builds on the previous two and represents the issue of the failure of articulation when it is defined as a question of developing standards that are accepted across segments rather than as a site for collaborative curriculum development.

## Objectives

The objectives of this project were to:

1. ensure comparability and establish common exit standards for pre-1A ESL composition courses, standards that would prepare students for college writing;

2. ensure that students transferring from one college to another have comparable writing proficiency, that all students entering 1A on any campus would be equally and adequately prepared for that class;

3. identify students most at risk in composition classes. By identifying students whose previous literacy practices do not prepare them for academic writing, we can adjust course content and teaching methodology to provide classroom literacy communities for our students;

4. determine the relationship between course syllabi and what actually takes place in the writing class by comparing syllabi with portfolios;

5. compare students' writing proficiency with their class assignments by comparing essay scores with portfolios; and

6. begin cooperation and dialogue among the participating institutions and develop a cooperative model for use throughout the state.

## Methods

A team of ESL instructors representing three of the community college districts in SJSU's service area (Mission, San José City, and Foothill) and faculty teaching in SJSU's Academic English Program (pre-1A for underprepared students) was assembled. Each campus collected data from two classes at each of the two levels of courses prior to 1A, a total of four classes from each campus. A sample of data from 1A classes was also collected for comparison. Five hundred and seventy-eight students participated, for most of whom standard academic English was an additional language.

We collected the following data:

1. *course syllabi.* We asked faculty to provide us with the syllabi that they handed out to students in class.

2. *entry/diagnostic/exit test instruments.* Each college provided copies of its test instruments, except those that are test secure (e.g., Michigan Test).

3. *student portfolios that included all student writing.* Since we wanted to discover exactly what happened in classrooms, we asked teachers to collect all writing—drafts, notes, final papers, and so on. We examined only a sample of the portfolios representing different abilities in writing as follows: two at each grade *A, B, C,* and *Fail.* The actual number submitted was 90 because not every class had two samples for each grade. The community colleges, for example, rarely had failing students because students who were failing mostly dropped out of class before the end of the semester. The project team examined the portfolios using an analytical scoring guide the team developed, a guide that reflected what we considered important attributes of university-level texts. We rated only the first and last out-of-class assignments using this analytical tool, as a contrast to the timed essay all students wrote.

4. *language use surveys.* This instrument had been used earlier at SJSU (Murray, Nichols, & Heisch, 1992) and gave us a profile of students at the different campuses, including demographic data, as well as students' uses of English and their L1 both at school and in the community.

5. *common essay exam, scored holistically by participating faculty using a six-point scale developed by the project team.*

We did not collect data on course grades since many variables contribute to this measure, ones that were not the focus of this project (e.g., attendance, number of assignments completed).

## Findings

### Student Profiles

The language use surveys showed that the students on the four campuses had very different profiles. The majority from the community colleges were high school graduates in their own countries, having arrived in the U.S. as young adults. In contrast, the majority from SJSU had been in the U.S. at least five years, having completed high school in the U.S. Community college students were older, on average, than SJSU students. Each community college in turn had its own profile. For example, more SJCC students spoke Vietnamese at age six than any other language, whereas at Foothill, the largest group spoke Spanish.

### Curriculum

We examined curriculum from two perspectives—course syllabi and portfolios of student work. A comparison of portfolios and syllabi showed that syllabi are an inaccurate indicator of what goes on in actual classrooms. Many portfolios were far richer in writing genres, the writing process, and instructor feedback than the syllabus would lead one to expect. On the other hand, other portfolios indicated that some instructors barely met the minimum requirements (e.g., genres, length of assignments) detailed in the syllabus.

We also found that syllabi varied across the colleges and even within the same class level at the same institution. For example, in some courses students wrote only paragraphs, while in others at the same level they wrote fully developed essays. Tasks also varied considerably, some faculty focusing only on personal essays, others requiring students to write in a variety of genres. Some syllabi were based on the modes of writing (compare/contrast etc.); others on topic areas (e.g., censorship).

Student performance (as measured by their portfolio scores) was affected by the course design and the task. For example, many students who wrote only paragraphs wrote fully elaborated papers, but, because they were required to write only a paragraph, wrote several pages as one paragraph. Students writing paragraphs about a famous person often wrote with little knowledge of the person chosen, leading to short, undeveloped papers. In contrast, students in classes where instructors asked students to interview a class or community member and describe that person wrote richer, more detailed papers.

**Student Progress**

To measure student progress, we compared the scores on the first and last out-of-class assignments. Surprisingly, the numerical data indicated that students had made no progress. A closer examination showed that end-of-semester tasks were often more difficult than those assigned at the beginning of the semester. Typically, the first assignment was a personal essay, usually narrative genre. Since this task usually allowed students to draw on material they were both familiar with and interested in, they were able to write a well-developed paper. In contrast, the end-of-semester tasks were often argumentative essays on controversial topics with which students were less familiar, and students thus scored lower on these assignments.

**Standards**

We compared student proficiency using the timed essay. There was no correlation between course level and common essays scores. Students with high and low scores appeared at all levels, although students from two of the four colleges consistently outperformed the other two. The higher scores, we believe, are a result of the inclusion of native-speakers in both samples. Overall, the results indicate that entrance requirements for the various colleges are inconsistent. This is especially the case at community colleges where entrance tests have been advisory rather than mandatory. Similarly, exit standards varied across institutions. Those institutions that had a common final had developed common standards, at least for the language proficiency required for a timed essay. These institutions all agreed that this standard-setting exercise had a positive backwash effect on the curriculum, with faculty having a clearer and more common goal for their instruction.

**Recommendations and Conclusions**

We held a workshop for faculty from the four institutions to share our results. During the workshop, we asked faculty to read essays and analyze them using the portfolio assessment tool to determine whether faculty agreed with the team—they did. We also discussed our draft recommendations, with which faculty also agreed. The project team made the following recommendations, which they took back to their individual campuses for comment and possible implementation.

1. Institutions should develop clear goals and expectations for courses at each level.

2. At all levels, writing assignments should include academic genres in addition to personal/narrative assignments.

3. At all levels students should be encouraged to develop full-length essays, not just paragraphs.

4. Students should be exposed to many, varied, and complete models of academic English in order to write in that genre. Reading is an integral part of literacy. Excerpts do not provide such models.

5. Institutions should administer a common assessment (e.g., a final essay examination) to develop common standards for each institution and to foster communication among instructors. Such a direct writing sample should be a reading, followed be a writing prompt based on the reading.

6. Portfolio assessment should be considered carefully before being used systemwide. In our study, the content of portfolios was inconsistent because different institutions and different instructors within institutions assigned different genres (varying from a descriptive paragraph to a fully-developed argumentative essay). And, our single analytical scoring guide was not sufficiently robust to compare different genres. To ensure comparability across segments and instructors, we would need a standardized curriculum (yet, curricula must be responsive to student need), more finely tuned descriptions of genre, and a greater understanding of the range of difficulty among genre (the last two issues both involve further research). Until we can address these issues, portfolios as assessment tools are best used at the individual class or institutional level, where agreements can be reached collaboratively rather than being mandated. See Murray (1994) for a detailed discussion of the use of portfolios as assessment tools.

7. The participating institutions should develop a collective bank of exit essay prompts.

## Conclusions

The five members of the project team learned much from this collaboration—about each other's programs and about articulation among colleges. For all of us, this was the first time we had looked in depth at each other's curricula, even though articulation agreements exist between the community colleges and SJSU. We were amazed at the similarities and differences across campuses. As we worked through the scoring guide for the timed essay and then the more complex guide for portfolio assessment, we learned what each valued in academic writing and were able to come to agreement. We engaged in debate and discussion about our pedagogical goals and our roles as educators. As we applied the instrument to student writing, we uncovered the different performances of students, differences often resulting from course syllabi and assignments. We also developed a richer understanding of the institutional complexities of our schools. While the SJSU classes one and two levels below freshman composition had 15 students, the equivalent at the community colleges had up to 38 students. As five colleagues working together, this newly acquired understanding was reward enough.

But, the project also had tangible benefits to our home institutions. One college gave reassigned time to a faculty member to develop coursewide holistically graded essay assessment. Another reworked the curriculum to incorporate reading and writing. Another made fully developed essays, rather than paragraphs, the major form of writing at all levels.

However, we also found (as we had done in the two previous projects) that comparability across segments is an impossible goal because of institutional demands. Articulating courses does not result in equal outcomes for students—or conditions for instructors. We began a conversation about our interdependent roles as educators within our local area, a conversation that was not to continue because funding for CCC/CSU Joint Projects has been discontinued. How can we continue this dialogue unfunded? Even the three grants we did receive gave no reassigned time—only funding for supplies, data analysis by a statistician, payment for faculty essay readers, and a graduate student from SJSU to coordinate the project. The numerous sessions to examine syllabi and to develop scoring guides and portfolio assessments we accomplished on our own time because we are reflective professionals who work to improve our own instruction and that at our institutions. Continuing the dialogue with no funding is not feasible, given faculty workloads.

I believe such dialogue is essential because the collaboration on these projects is articulation. Administrative agreements are not. Only the former can lead to educational change that ultimately affects our students' learning and lives. ■

**Endnotes:**

1. The project team was Carol Abate (West Valley College), Allison Heisch (SJSU), Alice Gosak (San José City College), Kurt Gravenhorst (Foothill College), and Nick Roberts (Cabrillo College).

2. Many faculty participated in this project, too many to cite here.

3. The project team was Gretchen Biswell (SJSU), Alice Gosak (San José City College), Patricia Nichols (SJSU), Carol Wilson (Mission College), and Karen Yoshihara (Foothill College). In addition, many faculty and students from each institution participated.

4. Since then, the Intersegmental Council of Academic Senates (ICAS) has convened a committee that has developed a draft framework for the language education of ESL students across segments, called *California Pathways*.

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The CATESOL Journal

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# Establishing Partnerships: San Diego County ESL Articulation Group

## A Simple Beginning

The San Diego County ESL Articulation Group traces its origins back to a San Diego regional CATESOL conference where its members first gathered in an informal get-together of ESL professionals working at the high school, adult education, community college, and university levels. It was a gathering for the discussion of common issues, a relatively unstructured meeting organized by two community college faculty. We met this way two years in a row at the regional conference, with a surprisingly large group of participants from all of these segments. Most of our discussion was informal, focusing on the problems our students had when they went on to the next level; we were trying to find out more about what other levels did in their ESL classes. Eventually, a small, dedicated, core group of ESL faculty from most of the area's seven community colleges (CCs) and one person each from the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and San Diego State University (SDSU) began meeting regularly[1]. Since then, the San Diego County ESL Articulation Group, with representatives from nine area institutions of higher education, has gained a few visitors and lost a few members, but now, nearly five years later, it is still in action, meeting monthly, with a strong sense of purpose and a feeling that we have already accomplished important things.

The basic group came together informally at first, with such goals as to share information on how we ran our programs, to problem solve on various issues, to commiserate over ESL teachers' difficult lot in life, and to ask the advice of others teaching and working in programs similar to ours who might already have been through situations we were beginning to face. We also wanted to investigate issues such as the barriers preventing students from progressing through our sequences of required courses, the unaccept-

ably large number of transfer students who were failing to pass competency exams at the four-year universities, the inconsistent course numbering systems that existed from college to college, and the gaps in curricula at our respective institutions.

Among the other issues that our mostly CC-level members were having to deal with at this time included:

- the recently instituted requirement that all CCs meet state-mandated placement standards in ESL, English, and math, as handed down by the state CC chancellor's office, and particularly the requirement that we validate our placement instruments within a certain allotted time period,
- the constant barrage (we felt) of problems from our institutions and our administrations, including the lack of funding, the extremely large ESL classes (often 30 to 40 in a composition course), and the undefined relationship between ESL and developmental English courses, and
- the lack of clear guidelines for establishing the credit status of ESL courses from among noncredit, nondegree-applicable credit, associate degree credit, and transfer credit (see Garlow, this volume, for further descriptions of the differences among these types of credit).

Needless to say, we felt that we faced many difficult problems, and we saw this articulation group as a place where we could meet with others like us to seek solutions.

## Articulation Group Projects

### A Chart of ESL Course Equivalency

One of the first projects of this group was to compile a chart showing equivalencies among levels of ESL writing courses offered at each of our institutions[2] (see Appendix A). While this did not initially seem like such a complex task, we soon realized that we didn't even have a system for comparing our different courses from institution to institution. Finally, after much confusion of terms and course numbers, we determined that the most useful way to do this was according to (a) the level of the course in relation to freshman composition, and (b) the type of credit each course offered. The wide variety of credit types assigned to various ESL courses at our schools is indicative of the lack of uniform treatment of ESL courses and content from institution to institution (see also Garlow, this volume). To our knowledge, the resulting comparison chart was the first attempt to determine approximate course equivalencies for our area's ESL programs.

## A Survey of ESL Transfer Students

Our articulation group became more formally organized when we decided to conduct a pilot survey of ESL students at our local CSU (California State University; in this case, SDSU) and discovered that a very large number of the ESL CC transfer students were being placed back into developmental or prefreshman ESL writing courses, even though many had already taken freshman composition, and in some cases, had even taken the sophomore writing course at local CCs (see Ching, McKee, & Ford; Lane, Brinton, & Erickson; and Murray, this volume, for similar findings). In other words, many of these students had already taken transfer-level writing courses at the local CCs, but when tested after transferring to SDSU, they were judged as unable to meet the lower division writing competency requirement, and were put back into prefreshman writing courses.

## The Establishing Partnerships Grant

In the fall of 1993, our articulation group applied for and received a small grant[1] to work on these issues. The proposed work included conducting a more complete survey of ESL transfer students in our region and obtaining a countywide writing sample for the purpose of determining whether the one-level-below-freshman courses at each of our institutions truly represented similar writing competency levels. Although we had been meeting for the previous two years on our own time and at our own expense, we had hoped that the grant would provide a small amount of compensation for the significant amount of effort we were making on top of full-time teaching loads. Ironically, when we were awarded the grant, the small amount we had requested as compensation for our time was deleted from the award amount because the grant committee felt that this was work we should be doing as a regular part of our jobs! We were chagrined to learn this because, as far as we were aware, we were the only such group meeting countywide at the time. Nevertheless, the grant spurred our efforts on significantly.

## A Countywide Sample of ESL Student Writing

In an effort to make further comparisons of the course content, exit standards, and overall expectations in equivalent courses at our different schools, we decided to administer a writing sample to students across the county. Thus, we searched for a prompt which would:

(a) be culturally unbiased,

(b) allow either a personal or impersonal (general) response,

(c) offer some basic guidance to students on how they might develop an essay in response,

(d) elicit some analysis of ideas, not just an enumeration of facts or opinions,

(e) ask for information from the students which would not require speculation, and

(f) be a topic on which students could comfortably write an essay of significant length.

We initially wrote two prompts which fulfilled our criteria, field-tested them, and finally settled on the one that seemed best suited for our purposes (See Appendix B).

After pilot testing this prompt at several of our institutions, we administered it to ESL students in two one-level-below-freshman composition classes at each of the schools represented in our group. On some campuses, the prompt was also given to students at other levels for purposes of comparison. Then, a scoring rubric was designed and, with input from all of our articulation group's members, a selection of benchmark essays was identified from the essays collected. These benchmark essays represented the range of student competencies at this level.

**A Revised Survey of Transfer Students at SDSU**

Our articulation group also revised the survey instrument used for our initial pilot study at SDSU. We administered it again in a more comprehensive manner to all of the ESL writing courses at SDSU during the fall semester of 1994. These comprised a total of 13 classes, distributed across the developmental, lower division, and upper division levels in the following manner:

| **Type of Course** | **Classes** | **Classes** |
|---|---|---|
| Developmental | RW 94 (3 sections) | RW 95 (4 sections) |
| Lower Division | Linguistics 100 (1 section) | Linguistics 200 (2 sections) |
| Upper Division | Linguistics 305W (3 sections) | |

Students who transfer to SDSU must fulfill a lower division writing competency requirement. Typically, they take SDSU's Writing Competency Test (WCT). Students who do not pass the WCT are referred to a developmental writing class in the department of rhetoric and writing (RW)

studies. ESL developmental students are asked to produce a brief writing sample to determine whether they would benefit from a writing course designed for second language learners. Such students are then advised to enroll in RW 94 or 95. Once the lower division competency requirement is fulfilled, students have the option of taking subsequent writing courses for ESL students (Linguistics 100, 200, & 305W) to fulfill the freshman composition or upper division writing requirements.

**Results of the survey**

Table 1 (below) indicates that an average of 61% of the students enrolled in the two developmental ESL classes (RW 94 and 95) had transferred from a CC.

**Table 1**
**History of Community College (CC) Transfers to SDSU**

| | *Developmental ESL RW 94/95* | *Freshman composition Ling. 100* | *2nd semester composition Ling. 200* | *Upper division Ling. 305W* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage of Transfers | 61 | 4 | 25 | 68 |
| Total no. responding | 104 | 25 | 28 | 59 |

Of those transfer students, virtually all (98.4%) had already completed the first semester composition requirement, as shown in Table 2. Since the RW 94/95 sequence, however, is designed to precede the RW 100 or first semester (freshman) composition course, this indicates that these students were put back into developmental writing after arriving at SDSU. In addition, nearly half (46.8%) of the transfer students enrolled in this level had also fulfilled the critical thinking or second semester composition requirement (RW 200, also indicated in Table 2).

**Table 2**
**Percentage of CC Transfer Students in Developmental Writing With Prior Freshman Composition Credit**

| *Student history* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| Had fulfilled RW 100 (freshman composition) | 98.4 |
| Had fulfilled RW 200 (2nd sem. writing and critical thinking) | 46.8 |

In contrast to the developmental classes, a much lower proportion of students enrolled in the lower division ESL courses (Linguistics 100 and 200) were transfers.

The data collected in the upper division classes yielded similar results to those obtained for the lower division students. Of the students enrolled in upper division ESL composition, 68% had transferred from a community college (Table 3).

**Table 3**
**Upper Division ESL Students**

| *Student history* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| Transfer | 68 |
| Had taken 1st sem. freshman comp. at CC | 75 |
| Had taken 2nd sem. freshman comp. at CC | 69 |

*Note.* Total = 59

Among the transfer students, 62.5% had already fulfilled the freshman writing requirement before transferring, but then had to take a developmental writing course (Table 4). Even more surprising, 55% had fulfilled both the 100 and the 200 level requirements *before* transferring but still needed to take developmental writing because of their inability to pass the WCT.

**Table 4**
**Upper Division Transfers**

| *Student history* | *Percentage* |
|---|---|
| Had taken 1st sem. comp. at CC and then took developmental writing | 62.5 |
| Had taken 2nd sem. comp. at CC and then took developmental writing | 55 |

The information obtained from the survey indicated that a large proportion of ESL students who had transferred from a CC to SDSU had had to backtrack and take developmental writing even though they might have completed transfer-credit-bearing composition courses before entering SDSU.

Clearly these data indicate a problematic transition to the CSU for many ESL transfer students. They strongly suggest the need for continued articulation efforts between the CSU and the CC systems, particularly with respect to the competency levels required for students having completed lower division writing or GE requirements.

### Academic Histories of ESL Students at SDSU

The broad academic histories of students in the various levels (Table 5) indicated that the transfer students who needed to backtrack when entering SDSU had had relatively less schooling in the US than those who did not. For example, of the RW 94/95 students, only 58.7% had attended a U.S. high school, compared to 84% of the Linguistics 100 students and 92.9% of the 200 students. Similarly, 32.7% of the RW 94/95 students had attended a U.S. junior high school in contrast to 68% of the Linguistics 100 students and 71.4% of the 200 students.

**Table 5**
**Levels of Schooling in the U.S.[a]**

| | *94/95* | *100* | *200* | *305W* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Preschool | 1 | 20 | 10.7 | 6.8 |
| Elementary | 17.3 | 56 | 46.4 | 30.5 |
| Jr. High School | 32.7 | 68 | 71.4 | 50.8 |
| High School | 58.7 | 84 | 92.9 | 62.7 |
| Adult Education | 5.8 | 4 | 0.0 | 5.1 |
| Comm. College | 63.5 | 24 | 71.4 | 94.9 |

[a]Percentage of total responding for each course.

Table 5 also shows that 94.5% of the upper division ESL students (i.e., those enrolled in Linguistics 305W) had fulfilled some requirements at a community college, even if they were not officially transfer students. The data in Table 5 indicate that ESL students rely heavily on CCs to fulfill language and other requirements. Moreover, CCs bear the particularly heavy burden of offering language instruction to students who arrive relatively late in their academic careers.

### Individual Interviews of ESL Transfer Students at SDSU

The results of the SDSU survey indicated that, of the ESL students who had transferred to SDSU, many had taken their language courses at a CC before they transferred. In an attempt to follow up on these findings, the articulation group decided to conduct personal interviews with a number of the students in the ESL writing courses at SDSU. Ten of these interviews were conducted in December, 1995, and members of the group are now engaged in analyzing them to identify what factors contributed to the

students' passing freshman- and sophomore-level writing courses at the CCs (often with grades of B and C), but later being required to take developmental writing upon transfer to SDSU.

Preliminary evaluation indicates that ESL students have been placed in developmental ESL writing courses via several avenues. Some reported that they took ESL placement tests and consistently followed their placement counselors' and instructors' advice in making their way through the ESL course sequence in a community college before transferring to SDSU but still ended up needing additional (developmental) ESL instruction. These students said they felt they had done everything right along the way and were never told by their instructors that their English skills were lacking. If they had been, they would have studied even harder or sought other remedies to make sure they were ready for university-level writing courses.

Other students reported that they were in a hurry to complete their ESL requirements and had bypassed several required courses on the way through the ESL and developmental sequence at the community college they had attended. (When further questioned, they reported that no one had checked to see if they had met the prerequisites for these courses.) Along the way, in order to pass their courses, students of both groups reported that they had obtained a significant amount of help from tutors and friends and that they had often had their papers "corrected" by tutors before handing them in. Thus, some of them believed that their instructors often had had no idea of their inadequate writing skills while they were in their courses. In this manner, they had managed to pass through sophomore-level English courses at the community college before being put "back" into developmental courses upon transfer to SDSU. While these reports are still preliminary, they offer us a glimpse into some of the problems that ESL and English faculty can begin to address.

### An ESL Student Textbook List

The articulation group also put together a preliminary list of the ESL textbooks being used at each of our institutions. While no additional work has been done with this unedited list, the group hopes to make this the focus of future meetings.

### Other Important Outcomes of the Articulation Group's Efforts

Many of the projects of the San Diego County ESL Articulation Group are still underway. We hope to complete the holistic evaluation of the ESL student writing samples that we gathered from each of our institutions and from which we have developed our benchmark essays. It is our

hope that they will ultimately lead to a system for comparing standards and expectations for the prefreshman level. We are also in the process of analyzing the oral interviews conducted at SDSU, and we hope to make our preliminary textbook list into a reference for choosing and evaluating future texts in our programs. However, we have already seen many important accomplishments, including:

(a) an increased understanding of issues in the teaching of ESL at levels other than our own,

(b) more confidence in the way we are each developing our programs, including less reinventing of the wheel in terms of program administration and new course ideas,

(c) increased respect for our plans for future ESL program development from many of our colleagues in our respective departments (e.g., from having seen the results of our survey),

(d) personal support from other members of the group for job-related problems, and

(e) increased awareness of statewide (legislative and other) ESL issues affecting the CC/College/University levels.

**Future Plans for the Articulation Group**

Our hope is that the continued collaboration of our articulation group will lead to more sharing of techniques, policies, and standards which will contribute to more coordination and better sequencing of ESL course outlines, better conformity to the state-mandated validation of ESL assessment and placement instruments, better standardization of placement procedures for ESL students, improved ESL curricula, more consistency and standardization of supplementary ESL textbook and multimedia selections, and the linking of our courses to statewide ESL proficiency level descriptors (See Browning, this volume).

It is also our hope to generate a document which will compare what students need for (a) placement into our different CC ESL courses, (b) the successful completion of writing requirements, so that accurate information can be given to students while they are in the CC ESL course sequences, and even before they transfer, and (c) a description of the writing competency standards expected of students transferring to the CSU. Finally, we would like to produce a handbook containing the results of our efforts and a chart comparing course equivalents of all ESL courses and other documents, to be disseminated in handbook form to counselors and other staff who work with ESL students at our own and other CC, CSU, and UC institutions.

The work of the San Diego County ESL Articulation Group is far from over. As observed by Flachman & Pluta and Murray (this volume), future financial support to provide release time for our members would contribute significantly toward facilitating the work of this group. Nevertheless, a general enthusiasm about working with others like ourselves and a strong belief in the value of this work keeps us going. ■

**Endnotes**

1. The core members of the group, which has met for much of the past five years, include:

   Virginia Berger/Patricia Bennett, Grossmont College
   Katheryn Garlow, Palomar College
   Anne Ediger, San Diego City College
   Myra Harada/Neva Turoff, San Diego Mesa College
   Clara Blenis, San Diego Miramar College
   Suzanne McKewon, Southwestern College
   Deborah Poole, San Diego State University
   Margaret Loken, University of California, San Diego

2. Although we initially started out to determine the equivalency of the ESL courses we offered (including courses in such areas as grammar and oral skills), we soon found that the task was much greater than we had originally thought and not every program offered the whole range of courses. Thus, we decided to first address writing courses since we all offered them.

3. The grant was funded by the Establishing Partnerships Joint Project Grants through the California Community Colleges Academic Senate and Chancellor's Office for projects coordinating activities between the CCs, CSU, and the UC.

## Appendix A—Comparison of ESL Writing Courses at San Diego County Community Colleges and Universities

| College Name | SDCCD (City, Mesa, Miramar) | Grossmont | Southwestern | Palomar | Mira Costa | SDSU | UCSD |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Upper Division | None | None | None | None | None | Eng 600W (3) NNS | None |
| Transfer Credit —GE (as Foreign Lang & Culture) | None | None | None | ESL 103 (5) CSU Cred<br>ESL 102 (5) CSU Cred<br>ESL 101 (5) CSU Cred | None | N/A | N/A |
| Transfer Credit —Electives | None | ESL 105 (3) UC & CSU Credit<br>ESL 102 (3) UC & CSU Credit | None | ESL 103 (4) UC Cred<br>ESL 102 (5) UC Cred | None | N/A | ESL 20A (2) max<br>(May not satisfy graduation requirements) |
| Transfer Credit —English (Freshman or Sophomore Level Composition) | ENG 208 (3)<br>ENG 205 (3)<br><br>ENG 101 (3)<br>ENG 105 (3) | ENG 124 (3) (Lit)<br>ENG 120 (3)<br>ENG 110 (3)—SDSU only—meets Eng. 100 req. if part of 39-unit pkg. (NS & NNS Sections Avail.) | ENG 116 (3)<br><br><br>ENG 115 (3) | ENG 203 (4) UC & CSU Credit<br>ENG 207 (4) UC & CSU Credit<br>ENG 100 (4) | ENG 202 (4)<br>ENG 201 (4)<br><br>ENG 100 (4) | NS: RW*20 (4)<br>NNS: LING 200 (3 each)<br>NS: RW 130<br>NNS: LING 130 (3 each) | College Writing (4-5 Qtr. units)<br>2 Upper Division |
| AA Degree-Applicable Credit | ENG 51 (3) | NS<br>ENG 101 (3) | ENG 104—Voc (3)<br>ENG 114—Acad (3)<br>ESL 45 (4) | ENG 50 (4) | ENG 80 (4) | N/A | N/A |
| Non-Degree-Applicable Credit (Financial Aid/ Workload Credit only) | NS[a] ENG 50 (3) NNS[b] ENG 10 ENG 09 ENG 08 ENG 07 ENG 06 (6 each (Wr & Rdg) | NS ENG 95 96 97 (5, 2, 3) (variable unit workload) NNS ESL 96 97 (3) ESL 94 95 (3) | NS ENG 65 (3) ESL 39 (4) ENG 60 (3) ESL 25 (4) NNS | NS ENG 30 (4) NNS ESL 1 (4) (12 hrs/wk) Levels 1–7 (Comp sig) (Lec/Lab) | NS ENG 80 (4) ENG 850 (grad) NNS ESL 80A (4) ESL 80 (4) (repeatable) ESL 849 ESL 898 (non-cred) Depts. | NS RW*4 (A-B) NNS RW*4 (A-B) (Repeatable) *Courses subject to change. Some courses available. Currently refer English as 2nd Lang. | ESL 10A-C Mastery required to move to next level<br>ESL 12 Pre-Freshman Writing |

*Source:* San Diego County Community College/University ESL Articulation Group, May 12, 1996

*Note:* [a]NS=Native speakers (of English); [b]NNS=Nonnative speakers (of English); ( ) Indicates number of units of credit

When not identified specifically as NNS or ESL, all courses are for mixed NS/NNS students.

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## Appendix B

## Instructions for Administering the Countywide Writing Sample of the San Diego ESL Articulation Project

*Remind students—during the class period before the sample is to be done—to be on time so they can use the full class period.*

**When the writing sample is taken:**

1. Distribute the writing prompt sheet. Write the class section numbers on the board.
2. Ask students to fill out the bottom portion of the sheet.
3. Say: "This is a timed writing. Consider it as representative of the best writing you are capable of doing at this point in the term."
4. Read prompt aloud to the students.
5. Ask: "Are there any questions?"
6. Answer all questions as time permits.
7. Say: "You will have 50 minutes to write. Write in ink, skip lines, and write on only one side of each page. Begin."

**At the end of 50 minutes:**

1. Say: "Time is up. Put your pens down and hand in your papers. Staple your prompt sheets to the back of your papers."

### Prompt Sheet

**Topic:** *What is a hero? Most cultures have heroes who represent qualities (such as courage or wisdom) that people admire most. Heroes can be found in areas such as education, religion, government, science, entertainment or sports. Select someone that many people think is a hero and discuss why they admire him or her. Name the person, describe what the person has done, and explain what qualities have made him or her a hero.*

Write an essay in response to the above question. Make sure your essay is well organized and the points you make are well developed. Information may come from a variety of sources: personal experience, movies or TV programs, class discussions, observations, or materials you have read.

The CATESOL Journal

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# Building Bridges: Articulating Writing Programs Between Two- and Four-Year Colleges

In the past, Bakersfield College (one of 105 California community colleges) and California State University, Bakersfield (one of 20 state university campuses), have suffered through years of jealousy and mistrust that very few of the current faculty at either school even understood. We just carried on the "tradition. "Although we serve the same population, we have developed standards of placement and assessment independently. Even though this practice seemed reasonable, it did not always serve the best interests of our students, especially those who planned to transfer from one institution to the other. In addition, the two schools (the only options for higher education in Bakersfield) have not always communicated standards, changes in policies, and reasons for such changes with each other. As a result, students have found themselves trying to meet two sets of requirements, often resulting in frustration and anger directed at one or both institutions. Faculty members responsible for formulating policy regarding assessment and placement did not have a way to learn from each other's successes or mistakes. The need for improved communication leading to formal articulation agreements and issue resolution was clear, a typical problem between most competing two- and four-year schools in the same geographic areas.

Putting pride aside, two faculty members (one from each campus) applied for and received a grant[1] to begin to pull together these diverse communities. We were unsure where we were headed, but we were determined to take the journey together. We called the project "Building Bridges: Articulating Placement and Assessment Procedures in Writing Courses at BC and CSUB."

Throughout the project, we focused on key areas for both campuses: assessment for placement, developmental standards, freshman composition standards, and proficiency standards for the two- and four-year degrees. Although not originally a part of the proposal, English as a second language and speakers of nonstandard dialects became ongoing topics of discussion as well. The goal of the project was not to duplicate one another's programs; we wanted to learn more about each other's programs so that we could develop formal articulation agreements and a better understanding of each other's institutions.

For each of the topics or phases of the project, the faculty from both campuses visited the other campus to become familiar with its procedures. We then met on neutral ground to discuss the information presented. As we became more comfortable with one another, our discussions became more candid and informative, with both groups admitting difficulties we face in placing and assessing students at all levels. We met a total of 11 times: seven at the campuses and four on neutral territory.

## Objective

The two schools are somewhat isolated geographically and needed to work together to ensure effective placement into and smooth transfer from one institution to the other. Unfortunately, this has not been the case in the past, due perhaps to misunderstandings. Because of this, the primary objective of the project was to open new and improve old lines of communication between the two schools. Both schools were misinformed about each other's programs. So an additional objective was to learn more about the programs at several different levels, to share relevant documents, and to discover whether any agreements could be formally articulated. Any such agreements would simplify both the assessment process and the transfer process.

Everyone would agree that students in any institution benefit from well-conceived, coherent assessment procedures. As White (1985) points out, the links between effective assessment and successful instruction are undeniable. Everyone profits from a sound assessment program on any level: entering students, transfer students, and graduating students. Thus, the primary goal of this grant proposal from Bakersfield College (BC) and California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB), was to coordinate placement and assessment procedures in both institutions' writing programs.

We easily divided our major goal of coordinating assessment and placement procedures into five subdivisions as follows:

(a) to articulate placement agreements for entering students at both institutions;

(b) to compare developmental performance standards;

(c) to coordinate our freshman composition course goals and grading standards;

(d) to participate in the lower division final exam process; and

(e) to correlate proficiency standards on both campuses.

We then developed each of these goals into a phase of our project, consisting of four activities: (a) an exchange of documents (such as test questions, grading rubrics, department policies, exam formats, course descriptions, course syllabi, and sample student papers); (b) open discussion moving toward clear, workable resolutions for both campuses; (c) a succinct statement of guidelines pertaining to the subject under discussion; and (d) formative and summative evaluation of the entire project, performed by an expert in writing assessment from the high school district office. This evaluation process was predominantly advisory, providing us insight into the effect each set of agreements would have on the secondary schools; however, it also helped us set up the criteria to be used for the summative evaluation at the end of the project.

Finally, we had some secondary agenda items for both our short- and long-term plans. For the short term, we wanted to (a) standardize our references and acronyms on both campuses so communication would be easier for faculty and students; (b) consolidate some of our committees so they would either meet jointly or report regularly to one another; and (c) explore the use of computers for diagnosis at each performance level in our writing programs. For the longer term, we hoped to share more writing faculty on two different levels: (a) part-time faculty (with master's degrees) and (b) teaching assistants trained in the CSUB English department's MA program and then placed in appropriate courses at either the state college or the community college.

## Methods and Implementation

The entire project was codirected by the English department liaison to the director of assessment at Bakersfield College and the coordinator of writing programs at California State University, Bakersfield, with the BC representative serving as the primary investigator. Each of them had limited released time to work on the project. Also directly involved in the grant were the CSUB English department chair and the BC division head, both of whom participated in the initial brainstorming sessions for this proposal.

The consultant for the project, who directs the Kern High School District's Writing Proficiency Program, played an integral role in helping

the project directors focus on particular issues to consider at each workshop. She read the evaluations from each of the sessions and the workshops (which she attended), using these comments to help direct the focus of future meetings. She also acted as a representative of the high school community, giving us important feedback about what the high schools needed from the two institutions of higher education (for example, more placement information, more material about expectations on the college level, etc).

Scheduling was one of the first and most important issues we dealt with upon receiving the grant. With personal calendars in hand, the directors met frequently with each other, with campus representatives, and with department members to determine the best dates and times so that as many faculty as possible could participate. We chose Monday through Thursday afternoons for the campus sessions and Friday afternoons for the off-campus workshops. We scheduled two sessions for each phase, one at each campus to explain a particular process and to allow participation. A joint workshop then followed to explore issues which arose from the campus sessions. Additionally, representatives from both campuses made brief presentations regarding the focus of the workshop.

Prior to our first phase, we distributed a sign-up sheet asking English faculty from both campuses to volunteer for one or more of the activities in the five phases of the grant; they were able to choose from among the information exchange, the open discussion, and/or the holistic reading activities in each phase. Both campuses have had so much interest in this kind of collaborative work that about 70% of the department at each school decided to participate in at least one of the five phases. A typical faculty member signed up for only one norming session, but usually two or three information exchanges. In any case, all department members on both campuses received copies of the paper work generated from each of our joint sessions.

Our schedule took shape as follows:

**Figure 1**
**Schedule**

***Phase 1: Placement***

BC placement essay norming
CSU English Placement Test (EPT)
EPT placement procedures
Placement workshop

***Phase 2: Developmental English***

English 100 Qualifying Exam: norming and grading
BC English 60 Exam: norming
Developmental standards workshop

***Phase 3: Freshman Composition***

CSUB Common Essay: norming and grading
Freshman composition workshop

***Phase 4/5: Proficiency Standards***

CSUB Upper Division Writing Competency Exam: norming and grading
BC Writing Competency Test: norming
Proficiency standards workshop

We implemented our plan in the following way:

**Phase 1: Placement Agreements**

At the beginning of our schedule, we concentrated on the procedures both campuses use for placing students in appropriate writing classes. For CSUB, this involves the systemwide English Placement Test (EPT); for BC, placement is determined by an objective test and an essay read holistically by English faculty who participate in a general norming session at the beginning of each school term. In this first phase, after the exchange of documents and the open discussion, self-selected CSUB writing faculty participated in the community college training and reading. In like manner, community college faculty took part in the placement of CSU students based on the state EPT results. We both streamlined our placement efforts as much as possible and recorded the correlations we established for both developmental (those courses considered by each campus to be below freshman composition) and lower division (our separate two-course freshman writing sequence) composition courses. Before this grant, CSUB and BC had no articulation agreements based on placement test scores, so we investigated and began to solve some of the problems arising from two different assessment instruments. These primarily involved the types of questions on each test, the criteria used for scoring each test, and the interpretation of the results. We completed this phase by meeting with our consultant from the high school district to discuss our placement agreements and our plans to implement these agreements.

**Phase 2: Developmental Standards**

This second phase focused on developmental performance standards. This is an area in which CSUB and BC have met their respective students' needs but have never discussed mutually relevant issues at any length. In our brainstorming sessions for this proposal, we found an unexpected number of similarities in our two developmental programs. We began this phase with an exchange of documents and an open discussion about the issues related to developmental composition. As we moved toward various resolutions and a specific statement about local developmental standards, including an articulation agreement equating our various developmental levels on both campuses, we participated in each campus' diagnosis and assessment of these students. Specifically, CSUB has a qualifying exam that consists of one essay graded holistically to determine whether or not the students are ready for freshman composition; BC has a department final exam. In each case, faculty from the two campuses participated in the norming sessions and, when possible, in the holistic reading on the other campus. We ended this phase with some outside advice from our evaluator about our individual assessment procedures for developmental students and of the accuracy of comparisons of courses on the two campuses. Most importantly, she advised us to become fully acquainted with each other's testing procedures and to use each other's assessment instruments when possible.

**Phase 3: Freshman Composition Standards**

Phase 3 addressed the freshman composition standards on both campuses. Although both schools accepted each other's courses in freshman writing, we knew little about each other's diagnosis and evaluation within the courses themselves. During this phase of our project, we exchanged scoring rubrics, goals statements, course outlines, and sample student papers; we also scheduled an open discussion of issues related to freshman composition. Other activities at this stage centered around the Common Essay given for assessment at midterm by CSUB. In the middle of each quarter, all students in composition classes write an inclass essay on one of two topics. These essays are then holistically graded by a panel of composition instructors. This holistic reading gives CSUB faculty a chance to talk about course goals and grading standards from developmental to senior-level writing. At this point, BC looked at CSUB grading standards and explored the advantages and disadvantages of extending this assessment procedure to their campus. To conclude this phase, we recorded our collective insights and agreements regarding freshman composition in particular and consulted with our outside evaluator.

**Phase 4: Lower Division Exit Exams**

Next, we focused our attention in particular on BC's Writing Competency Exam for their introductory freshman composition course. At present, this essay exam, graded holistically, determines whether or not a student passes the first semester of freshman composition; it also serves as the proficiency exam for students' AA degrees. In this case, following our routine exchange of documents and open discussion, CSUB faculty participated in the norming session for this end-of-course assessment procedure, working to establish correlations between course goals and grading standards on both campuses. We also looked at assessment and grading standards across the disciplines through our separate writing-across-the-curriculum programs. All observations were carefully recorded in a summary statement for this phase and were fine tuned with the help of our outside consultant.

**Phase 5: Proficiency Standards**

Our last phase concentrated on the proficiency standards in place on both campuses. Both BC and CSUB require proof of writing competency before students graduate. At our brainstorming sessions for this proposal, we discovered that we both administer essay questions that require argumentative responses. After we exchanged and discussed relevant documents, we discussed establishing a local topic bank that both schools contribute to and can draw from (even though we demand different levels of performance in response to the questions). We also participated in the norming sessions for each other's holistic readings of these separate competency exams and, when possible, in the holistic readings themselves. We concluded with some statements for the outside consultant about local proficiency standards for the AA and the BA degrees, which, along with all of our other agreements, will be duplicated and circulated to the high schools in our service areas.

In every phase, each campus demonstrated for the other campus a particular placement process or assessment instrument at various levels of its program. As part of the demonstration, the visiting campus then participated in some part of the actual evaluation process and returned to its own campus with a new understanding and usually an appreciation for their colleagues' procedures at the other school.

At the end of each phase, we scheduled a workshop on neutral territory to discuss the similarities and differences in our procedures at each level of our writing programs and to see if we could reach any agreements to avoid duplication of efforts in instruction or assessment. Once trust had been

built up on the human level and faculty had actually worked with each other's material, the agreements came naturally.

## Outcomes

The proposed formal articulation of placement standards and curriculum, a result of the project, affected students directly by simplifying the processes for entering either institution and transferring from one institution to the other. Within this framework, faculty were given an opportunity for professional growth by learning more about each other's programs, goals, and concerns, all of which were similar at the two schools. In addition, the grant participants expressed a desire for continuing the process by meeting again to discuss various issues introduced during the project. Finally, faculty suggested other subject areas for future meetings, such as the literature survey course taught at both schools. Most importantly, both schools used the project to reexamine their programs and to initiate further in-house discussions.

As a result, communication has improved internally on both campuses. The English department at BC has included the ESL department in its discussion of the proposed resolutions. Also, the BC project director has made presentations to her president's cabinet and then to her counseling department—as a means of explaining the project and improving communication. Similar meetings have occurred on the CSUB campus, most particularly with the learning disabilities office.

The most important changes are the formal resolutions which articulate placement into and successful completion of courses at both campuses, including developmental English, ESL, and freshman composition. These resolutions, once approved by both schools, were shared with all departments at BC and CSUB and with the feeder high schools.

Our most tangible product was the resource manual that we published, including placement procedures and new articulation agreements between the schools. Course descriptions, outlines, sample syllabi, and assignments for all writing courses at both campuses form the heart of the publication. This manual was distributed not only to both BC and CSUB English faculty but also to key personnel at all of the high schools in our common service area. The demand for this book has been overwhelming. We even received orders for the manual from elementary schools and from counselors at all levels. It is seen in our local community as an agreed-upon statement about the requirements and demands of higher education in our area. The book itself has had several uses in the community that range from counseling to academic preparation for college.

## Continuing to Build Bridges

Both schools have followed up on these grant activities in a variety of ways:

First, we continue to participate in each other's grading sessions. In addition, the community college project director has participated in California State University readings on the state level.

In close collaborative fashion, the project directors have also delivered six professional papers together on topics ranging from teaching literature to funding grant proposals.

In addition, the community college district made a joint 1991 Innovator of the Year Award to both project directors—breaking years of tradition by giving a community college award to a CSU faculty member.

And finally, the two schools continue to meet throughout the year—at informal local exchanges regarding the writing curriculum and at an annual scheduled retreat when the writing faculty from both campuses retreat to the mountains for a full day to discuss the curriculum and any pressing related issues.

## Recommendations

Here are our best recommendations for other schools attempting to replicate this project:

1. Make sure the director(s) have enough assigned time.

2. Include key people in all brainstorming and initial planning sessions (department chairs, division chairs).

3. Include a wide variety of colleagues in planning and presentations so they feel more involved and committed.

4. Keep everyone, including nonparticipants, informed of developments through regular communication.

5. Recognize professional expertise by paying all presenters and participants.

6. Talk regularly to your counterpart(s) at the other campus.

7. Make a conscious and continuous effort to keep the lines of communication open after the formal aspect of your project is complete.

## Conclusion

Participants filled out evaluation forms along the way. Over and over participants stressed the comfortable atmosphere and pleasure in getting to know one another. Relationships began to form as participants met at more than one session of the project. Future working relationships began to be established. We also received constant feedback from a third community—our outside consultant from the Writing Proficiency program in the Kern High School District and our direct link to the high school English department chairs.

"Building Bridges" proved to be an apt title for the project, for we have indeed begun to build bridges of communication, understanding, and respect. These opportunities for professional growth were unparalleled in our region, and we are confident that they can be replicated in any academic setting. The focus of this project was on this union of three communities with all of the attendant variations of that mission. This project not only improved relationships among the schools at all levels but, most importantly, improved our students' lives. ■

## Endnotes

1. This project was funded jointly by the chancellors' offices of both the California Community Colleges and the California State University.

2. Each faculty member was released from one course of her normal teaching load for the academic year. Each school also employed one student assistant.

3. To receive a copy of the manual used in the scoring process please contact Kim Flachmann at English Department, CSUB, 9001 Stockdale Highway, Bakersfield, CA 93309 or e-mail KFlachmann@academic.csubak.edu

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The CATESOL Journal

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# Noncredit to Credit Articulation: The City College of San Francisco Model

City College of San Francisco serves approximately 21,000 students a semester in our noncredit program and 4,000 students in our credit program. FTE for noncredit is approximately 5,500 and for credit, 1,700. Over half of the students we serve are Chinese, and nearly one fifth are Hispanic. Approximately 13% of our students are Russian, and Southeast Asians make up 9% of our student population. Twenty-five percent of our noncredit students have already had some college education, and another 38% have had some high school.

Noncredit ESL classes are offered at six major campuses and numerous outside locations. Credit ESL classes were offered almost exclusively at the Phelan campus up until several years ago. Since the merger of the noncredit and credit programs, described below, a larger variety of credit classes are offered at the other campuses. The noncredit program currently offers eight levels—beginning-low 1 to intermediate-high 8. Prior to fall, 1994, the program consisted of seven levels ranging from literacy to ESL 600. Courses were revised to align with the state model standards in fall, 1994. The credit program offers seven levels ranging from beginning to low advanced as listed in Table 1.

The ESL program recognized a need to facilitate the transition of students from credit to noncredit classes in the 1980s. However, no articulation program existed. Prior to 1990, the noncredit and credit programs were administered by separate divisions at the college and, in fact, the credit ESL program was part of the English department. This meant that the administration, faculty leadership, counseling departments, and testing programs were all separate. Thus, noncredit students who wanted to take credit classes needed to fill out a separate application, take a different placement test, and negotiate the registration process on their own at a different cam-

pus, just as if it were a different institution. The ESL program began to facilitate the transition from noncredit to credit by negotiating an agreement in the early 1980s whereby students who passed a noncredit Level 600 Certificate Test were guaranteed placement into ESL 3 (now ESL 62) in the credit program, no matter how they placed on the credit placement test. However, as described here, we found that transition rates were low.

**Table 1**
**ESL Programs at City College of San Francisco**

| Noncredit Classes | Credit Classes | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Course Name* | *ESL Course* | *Description* | *Hours/Units* |
| Beginning low 1 | | | |
| Beginning low 2 | 22 | Grammar, Writing, | 20 hours |
| Beginning high 3 | | Reading, Listening | 10 units |
| Beginning high 4 | 32 | Grammar, Writing | 20 hours |
| Intermediate low 5 | | Reading, Listening | 10 units |
| | 42 | Grammar & Writing | 5 hours/3 units |
| Intermediate low 6 | 44 | Reading & Vocabulary | 5 hours/3 units |
| Intermediate high 7 | 46 | Conversation Skills | 3 hours/2 units |
| | 48 | 42 plus 44 | 10 hours/6 units |
| | 52 | Grammar & Writing | 5 hours/3 units |
| Intermediate high 8 | 54 | Reading & Vocabulary | 3 hours/2 units |
| (formerly ESL 600) | 56 | Conversation Skills | 3 hours/2 units |
| | 58 | 52 plus 54 | 8 hours/5 units |
| *Note.* The lines indicate approximate equivalencies between the credit and noncredit programs. | 60 | Grammar | 3 hours/2 units |
| | 62 | Composition | 3 hours/3 units |
| | 68 | 60 plus 62 | 6 hours/5 units |
| | 72 | Intermediate Composition | 3 hours/3 units |
| | 82 | Advanced Composition | 3 hours/3 units |

| Other Noncredit ESL Classes |
|---|
| **Beginning Low Intensive** |
| **Beginning High Intensive** |
| **Intermediate Low Intensive** |
| **Intermediate High Intensive** |

| Other Credit (Elective) ESL Classes | | |
|---|---|---|
| 49 | **Pronunciation** | **3 hours/2 units** |
| 59 | **Oral Communication** | **3 hours/3 units** |
| 71 | **Editing Your Writing** | **3 hours/3 units** |
| 79 | **Speaking & Pronunciation** | **3 hours/3 units** |

With the merger of the noncredit and credit divisions at City College in 1990, ESL became one department, with one faculty chair; counseling became one department as well. These changes facilitated and accelerated our efforts to develop an articulation program which has significantly increased the number of noncredit students enrolling in credit courses.

## Existing Transfer Rates

To begin our investigation of the rate of movement from the noncredit to the credit programs, we decided, in the spring 1992 semester to track our noncredit Level 600 students. Level 600 (high-intermediate) was the highest level of ESL offered in the noncredit program, and we reasoned that students at this level of English competency were probably more ready than their lower level counterparts to move successfully to credit course work. Additionally, students in this level represented a relatively small and easy group to track.

Initial investigations revealed that very few Level 600 students were moving from the noncredit to the credit programs. It became our focus to determine why this articulation was not occurring.

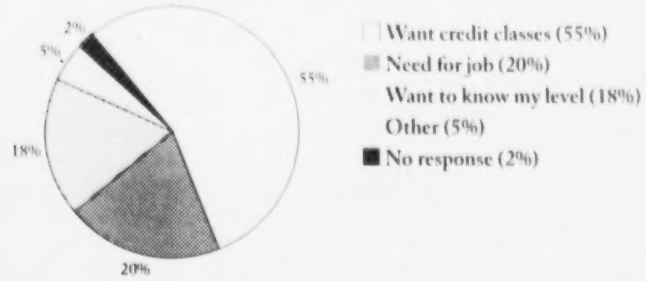
Upon completion of Level 600, students were eligible to take the Level 600 Certificate Test, an in-house multiple-measures tool assessing grammar, writing, listening, and oral production skills. Students who passed the Level 600 Certificate Test, in addition to receiving a certificate of program completion, were eligible for guaranteed placement into Level 3 (high intermediate) credit ESL classes. To enroll in credit classes, however, these students were required to complete the Credit Placement Test *in addition* to the Level 600 Certificate Test. Students who scored lower than Level 3 on the credit test were allowed to enter Level 3 classes based on their Level 600 exit scores. Students wishing to transfer to credit classes had to make their own arrangements to travel to one particular campus to take the Credit Placement Test and were responsible for negotiating the registration process. This apparently was not happening. Of the 66 students passing the Level 600 Certificate Test in the fall 1991 semester, only 14 took the Credit Placement Test. In spring 1992, of the 96 passing the certificate test, only 17 transferred to credit classes. Students either did not desire to transfer from noncredit to credit, or they needed assistance in making the transition.

## Needs Assessment

Rather than simply speculate about reasons for the low transfer rates, we decided in the spring 1992 semester to go directly to the source for some answers. Level 600 students, we reasoned, would not have difficulty telling us what their needs were vis à vis articulation to credit. Perhaps they simply were uninterested in taking credit programs, or maybe they were having difficulty with the transition. To pinpoint why students were not transferring to the credit program, a needs assessment was conducted. All students participating in the Level 600 Certificate Test in the spring 1992 semester were asked why they were taking the exam. As can be seen in Figure 1, the majority (55%) of students indicated that they would like to

take credit classes. These data strongly indicated that Level 600 students indeed wanted to go to the credit program but were encountering obstacles. Our next step was to design and implement specific changes to help students move more easily from the noncredit to the credit program.

**Figure 1**
**Level 600 Needs Assessment Results**




## Development and Implementation of the Process

### The Test Delivery System

It seemed obvious that requiring transferring students to test twice made movement to credit less than attractive. To overcome this obstacle, the ESL department decided in the fall 1992 semester to give Level 600 students the Credit Placement Test in lieu of the traditional Level 600 Certificate Test. Equivalency scores were generated to ensure that those students not wishing to go to credit classes could receive a certificate of completion while those indicating a desire to transfer would receive accurate placement.

To eliminate the problems that students wishing to transfer to credit might have had regarding the logistics of testing and registration, testing was moved from the unfamiliar "credit" campus to a campus closer and more familiar to the noncredit student population.

### Faculty Advisors

To ensure that students enrolled in Level 600 made informed choices about their academic future and received the help they needed in moving into the credit sector, faculty members from each of the five major campuses offering noncredit classes were hired as faculty advisors. The advisors, working with campus counselors, visited the Level 600 classrooms to dis-

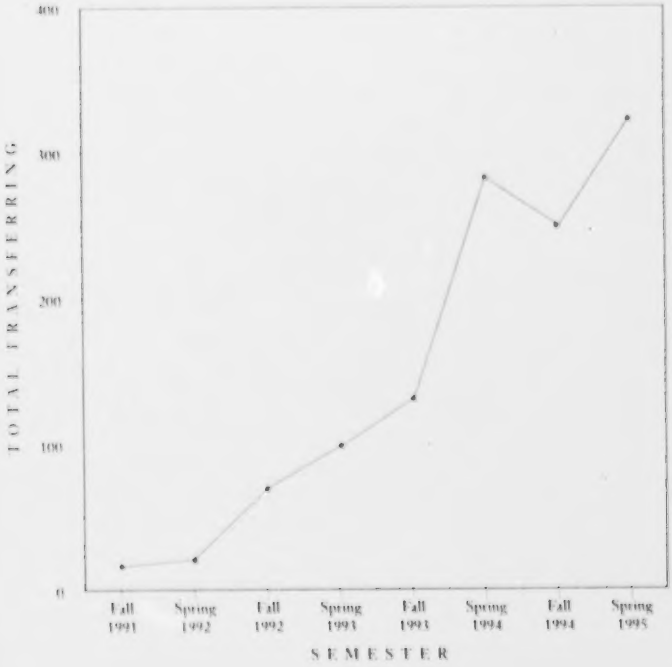
cuss the differences between noncredit and credit curricula and assisted students in determining their academic goals. Following testing, those students wishing to transfer to credit classes were asked to attend special registration and orientation sessions.

## Results

Conducting a needs assessment, changing the test delivery system, and introducing the use of faculty advisors and counselors produced a dramatic change in the number of Level 600 students transferring to credit. As Figure 2 indicates, a total of 62 Level 600 students transferred to credit in the fall 1992 semester, a significant increase from the two previous semesters. Naturally, we were delighted with these results and felt that we were well on our way to creating a good working model of articulation. Since 1992, we have tinkered with the system in a variety of ways to make transfer as easy as possible for those students interested.

**Figure 2**

**Total Number of Students Transferring to Credit by Semester**



## Refining the Process

Once our basic model of articulation was developed, we began to look at specific points in the process with an eye toward refinement. It was not enough just to change the test delivery system and introduce faculty advisors; we wanted to gain the buy-in of other departments in our efforts. To that end, a committee was created to look at testing and registration. Aside from ESL department representation, the committee was comprised of members of the counseling department as well as campus deans and administrators in charge of testing and matriculation. By incorporating all members of the college community in our efforts, we found that changes to the process were more easily made and enforced.

The counseling department was recruited to take over the role first performed by faculty advisors. Noncredit teachers were given in-service training about the credit program so that they could better assist students in the decision-making process. The test delivery system was extended to all major campuses offering noncredit classes. Priority registration was given to noncredit students transferring to credit, and the entire process was expanded beyond Level 600 to include noncredit ESL students at all levels interested in transferring. The implementation and refinement of our articulation model has garnered excellent results. While a total of 62 students transferred from noncredit to credit in the fall 1992 semester, 313 students did so in the spring 1995 semester.

Currently, the model developed for use within the ESL department is being expanded to other noncredit departments. Specifically, we are studying how to improve articulation between noncredit ESL and other noncredit programs at City College of San Francisco, including vocational training, Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Education Development (GED). Following the model, we will establish need, then examine how the test delivery system functions. We will create a committee of all interested and affected departments to determine how to best increase articulation for our students. We are confident, given the success of our articulation model, that we will be successful in our continued efforts to help students.

## Summary

The experience at CCSF suggests that there are several key steps to take if you want to develop a successful articulation program.

**Needs Assessment**

First of all, determine how many students in the noncredit program are interested in enrolling in a credit program. Assess what obstacles may currently exist that you will need to overcome—for example, lack of knowledge about available credit programs, both on the part of students and instructors, student fear of moving out of their comfortable noncredit environment into the unknown world of credit, and lack of communication between the noncredit and credit programs. Determine at which levels you want to focus your articulation efforts. At CCSF we initially decided to focus on the top level of noncredit students. Although we believe that most students benefit from staying in noncredit throughout most of our program to gain basic language skills, we have expanded our outreach to Levels 4 and up because we know that a full range of classes is available in our credit program and some lower level students are interested in credit.

**Buy-in of Major Players**

Get a commitment from all major players to your plans. This includes faculty, counselors and administration. Noncredit faculty may be reluctant to "let the noncredit students go," feeling that they will be losing students. They may need to be educated about the opportunities available for students in credit courses and the demands of a credit program so that they can provide accurate information to their students, encourage potential transfer students, and prepare them for the differences they will face in a credit program. Credit instructors can help orient noncredit instructors to the credit program.

Counselors are key players, too. The essential components of the CCSF program are the orientation workshops counselors provide and the assistance they give to students in working through the application and registration processes and advising students who matriculate into the credit program. Counselors from the credit and noncredit programs will need to work together to determine who will be responsible for what.

Faculty and counselor chairs or coordinators and administrators need to support the plan and direct its implementation. You will need to make decisions, either jointly or with input from faculty and counselors about such things as what placement instruments and procedures will be used, whether or not placement testing and counseling can and should take place at the noncredit campus, whether or not you can and want to use faculty advisors, and what level of students to focus your articulation efforts on. You'll want to find out how the noncredit and credit classes articulate. You may wish to consider implementing special noncredit classes that prepare students for academic study.

### Test Delivery System

The most important decision to make is whether or not it would be helpful to bring the credit placement test to the noncredit location. This was an important step at CCSF to overcome the fear noncredit students might have of leaving their own comfortable campus. Consider eliminating duplicate testing so that you are not asking students who are exiting the noncredit program to take your exit test as well as the credit placement test. This will require establishing equivalency scores for the two tests if you wish to offer a certificate of completion to the noncredit students.

### Priority Registration

Another key component of the CCSF model is priority registration for the noncredit students. Our credit classes are impacted; new students often find themselves on waiting lists their first semester and may not be able to enroll in classes they need. We realized that if students completed the application, placement, and registration process, only to find that they could not enroll in classes, our efforts would be in vain. We developed a system for lowering the cap on some of our credit classes in order to save a few seats in some sections that could be given to the transferring noncredit students. After the registration process is completed for these students, caps are raised back up to their normal level.

### Location of Credit Classes

Consider bringing some credit ESL classes to the noncredit site. If the classes are available in familiar surroundings, students will be more likely to sign up. Once they have tried a credit class, they may find it easier to go to another campus to continue the credit program. At CCSF we increased the credit offerings at our noncredit sites and the times they are available. Now, instead of only the few night classes that were offered at the Phelan campus five years ago, we have some morning and afternoon classes as well. Each noncredit campus participates in the decision as to which credit course(s) are likely to be most needed at their site.

### Student Support Services

Some extra student support seems to be necessary to assist students in making the jump into unknown territory. As discussed here, orientation workshops, aware and supportive faculty, counselor assistance in the application and registration process, and specially designed noncredit classes which prepare students for academic work should all be seriously considered.

## Evaluation and Follow Up

Track your success rate. Find out how many noncredit students do indeed sign up for credit courses. Evaluate how your plan is working and make revisions as necessary. As described here, at CCSF we didn't implement all phases at once, but rather refined the process as we progressed. We suggest that a successful program can be designed for interinstitution as well as intra-institution articulation if attention is paid to these key components. ■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The CATESOL Journal

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# Adult School to Community College: The Fremont Adult School-Ohlone College Model

The cities of Fremont and Newark are located in southern Alameda County, on the eastern side of San Francisco Bay. As with other communities in the Bay Area, Fremont and Newark have experienced a tremendous growth in their immigrant population. The adult immigrant ESL population is served by two distinct entities, the Fremont Adult School (FAS), which is under the jurisdiction of the local unified school district, and Ohlone College, the district's community college. The ESL program at FAS focuses primarily on life skills as outlined in the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) framework. The adult school program is seen as the first step for newly arrived immigrants in achieving the linguistic and cultural fluency necessary for success in the United States. Ohlone College is seen as the next step for students whose primary aim is to complete a postsecondary degree, that is, either an associate in science or arts, a four-year college degree or a postgraduate degree. The program at Ohlone College is academically oriented, its goal being the preparation of students for college-level English courses which in turn serve the students in content area courses.

## Articulation Between Ohlone College and Fremont Adult School

The ESL program at Ohlone College was started in 1988 after much discussion and deliberation with colleagues at FAS. In fact, Ohlone had had ESL students for many years, and instructors had found different ways to accommodate their particular needs without any ESL courses. However, the idea of an ESL program was threatening to some constituencies on campus who feared that ESL students would receive space and funding that would otherwise go to other groups on campus. The idea was also of con-

cern to FAS, which had previously been the sole provider of ESL-specific instruction in the Fremont-Newark area for many years. Representatives from FAS attended ESL planning meetings in order to monitor the development of the program. Of primary concern to FAS was whether or not classes at Ohlone would duplicate what was being offered at FAS.

The general feeling at Ohlone College meshed well with the concerns at the adult school. Instructors at the college, already concerned by the impact an ESL program would have on other areas, did not favor a program that would encourage students to attend the college who would be better served by the life-skills focus of FAS. Thus, from the start, the focus at Ohlone was on building a program that would be academically oriented and that would be clearly distinct from the offerings at FAS.

After the college offered one year of trial ESL classes, I was hired full-time to coordinate the new ESL program. The concerns of the adult school were shared with me, and one of my first actions was to meet with the director of the ESL program for FAS. The importance of our meeting at that time was not so much to discuss curriculum as to establish lines of communication. We agreed that we wanted to see the adult school and the college working together to serve the needs of students in the area without the college duplicating the services offered by the adult school. At that time, the Ohlone ESL program consisted of three classes with a total of four sections. All three classes focused primarily on grammar and writing. FAS, on the other hand, offered general ESL classes at four levels, the curriculum of which was determined largely by the life skills outlined in the CASAS framework. As a result of establishing a line of communication between the two institutions, two programs were implemented, one of which has proven successful. In the second year of the program, I became quite aware of the low level of speaking skills for many of our students. Because of the academic focus of our program, it was not appropriate to develop a new course focused on everyday conversation skills. With approval from my division dean and the vice president of the college, I entered into talks with the director of the FAS ESL program about offering a section of a higher level FAS conversation class at the college. Classroom space in the afternoon at the college was available; FAS would control the class and receive all funding related to class attendance. The class was advertised by instructors in the college ESL classes. In its first semester, the class had 15 students; however, the second semester the number dropped to 10, making the class no longer cost effective for FAS to offer. In our evaluation of the class, the director of the FAS ESL program and I recognized several factors working against the success of the class. First, the class was not advertised in the regular college catalog.

Therefore, students often forgot about the class when planning their schedules, in spite of information given in their ESL classes. Second, the lack of credit attached to the class also affected it. Many students were on financial aid, and the FAS conversation class could not be counted towards their enrolled units. With regret, but recognizing the inherent problems of offering future FAS classes at the college, we discontinued the conversation class.

### Assessment and Orientation for FAS Students

The second, more successful effort has been the facilitation of assessment and orientation for FAS students interested in transferring to the college. In this case, the Ohlone assessment counselor worked with the director of the ESL program at FAS to set up two dates for placement testing for adult school students. The adult school invited students who scored above eighth grade level on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to sign up for the Ohlone assessment process. On the date of the assessment, the assessment counselor arranged for the tests to be given on site at the adult school. Orientation and counseling were offered either at the adult school or at the Ohlone campus about a week later. The students still needed to go to the college to register, but they were given priority over other new students for registration. This process has proved quite successful in placing students at the college. The adult school has also been able to use the results of the testing to encourage students to work on their foundational skills at the adult school by pointing out that the majority of students tested from FAS placed above the entry ESL level at the college.

The Ohlone assessment process has also been coordinated with the adult school in the other direction. Since some students who come to the college for placement are evaluated at below the level of ability needed for success in our foundation level of ESL classes, these students receive information during orientation on classes available at the adult school. Students who inform Ohlone counselors of their interest in registering for adult school classes are able to bypass the waiting list at the adult school.

### The Present Ohlone College Program

Today, the ESL program at Ohlone College consists of nine classes at two levels. These classes include speech/conversation, reading, grammar, listening, and writing. Entry into the ESL program is determined by an assessment process, including the Secondary Level English Proficiency Test (SLEP) , currently under validation, and a holistically scored essay.

The Ohlone ESL program, because of its academic focus, overlaps only minimally with the ESL program at FAS. Due to student demand, the

FAS program has added some academically focused classes in the different skill areas of grammar, writing, reading, listening, and conversation one day a week. These classes have had no appreciable impact on enrollment at the college because the students who enroll in them are enrolled FAS students. Similarly, students already enrolled at Ohlone find it inconvenient to attend classes at the FAS campus and thus the two programs do not compete for students. Furthermore, the affected classes at both institutions are limited enough that demand continues to outstrip availability.

The only area of current concern is the reading program at Ohlone. Reading instructors at the college who also work for the adult school believe that many of the students currently enrolling in reading programs at the college would benefit greatly by first attending classes at FAS. However, it has been difficult to articulate the Ohlone reading program with the reading program at FAS. The earlier failure with the FAS conversation class at the college has made the college and FAS very cautious about expending limited resources on bringing another FAS class to the Ohlone campus. Due to recent lawsuits concerning access to ESL programs, counselors at the college do not bring up FAS as an educational option when students have already placed into one of the college's ESL grammar classes. Even suggestions by instructors that students might want to attend an FAS class to increase their skill in a given area are not readily accepted by students because of both the inconvenience of attending classes at a different site and the perceived relative prestige of attending college as opposed to adult school classes. With the validation and implementation of the SLEP, even if students clearly test below the entry level for the college's reading courses, it is doubtful whether students can be successfully encouraged to attend FAS reading courses for their foundational work.

### Factors Contributing to Successful Articulation

Articulation between FAS and Ohlone College has been a cooperative effort. Here are factors which I believe have contributed to its general success.

First, Ohlone and FAS have clearly separate programs. As described above, the programs overlap in only a minimal way. Furthermore, Ohlone College does not offer any noncredit classes in ESL. As a result, Ohlone does not draw away students from the adult school who might otherwise be attracted by either the perceived prestige of attending a college versus an adult school program or by the fact that financial aid is more readily available at the college. In the same vein, FAS does not offer classes at the academic level of classes at Ohlone College. Students thus have a clear

choice of which institution to attend based on their English ability level, needs, and interests.

Second, Ohlone College and FAS have maintained a good working relationship since the start of the ESL program at Ohlone. As coordinator of the program from its inception, I was able to make sure that I was in contact with FAS to address any of their concerns. Another circumstance that helps the relationship between the two institutions is that several part-time instructors work both at Ohlone and at FAS. Concerns from the adult school are quickly relayed to me, and I can respond promptly before the concerns become problems.

Third, Ohlone is fortunate to have an assessment counselor who is concerned with maintaining quality articulation with the adult school. Our assessment counselor continues to work closely with the director of the ESL program at FAS to help streamline the process for adult school students to attain admission to Ohlone.

Fourth, at the current time, more ESL students seek to enroll than both institutions can serve. The waiting list at FAS is in the hundreds, and dozens of students are unable to get into ESL classes at Ohlone every semester. Thus students are not a scarce commodity causing a competitive spirit to arise between the two campuses serving this urban area.

It is uncertain how the needs and numbers of ESL students in the Fremont-Newark area will change in the future. However, it is certain that as long as Ohlone College and FAS keep open the lines of communication and work together to articulate our respective programs, the students in the area will be well served. ■

The CATESOL Journal

VINCE BURNS and
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*ESL Language Centers/San Diego*

# Articulation Between a Private Language School and Other Academic Institutions: The Case of ELS Language Centers/San Diego

The San Diego ELS Language Center, along with the other centers throughout the ELS system, participates in articulation agreements with over 500 institutions nationwide. Each year, approximately 90 college- and university-bound students from the San Diego center satisfy college/university English requirements for admission by completing Level 109, the highest level of the program. These students do not need to submit TOEFL scores to the institutions to which they wish to transfer, as long as the institutions are included in this articulation agreement. Although some students have transferred to schools in Florida, Oklahoma, Washington, and other states, the majority transfer to schools in San Diego and Los Angeles. This article will describe the experience the San Diego ELS center has had with articulation agreements and how the agreements have been maintained over time.

## The ELS Language Centers Program

The ELS Language Centers/San Diego is a proprietary intensive English program (IEP) not affiliated directly with any college or university. The program offers nine levels, with each level having four weeks of instruction, 30 hours per week. Classes include general ESL instruction as well as English for academic purposes and TOEFL preparation. The program also includes college counseling and assistance with the college application process for all interested students.

## Articulation Between ELS Language Centers and Other Institutions

One of the main functions of an intensive English program is to prepare students for colleges and universities, both to function linguistically in an American higher education environment and to improve their English skills to the degree necessary to pass an English proficiency exam and be granted acceptance to a college or university. The ELS Cooperative program, an articulation agreement between ELS Language Centers and over 500 colleges, universities, and vocational/technical schools, was created to give students and schools an alternative to using standardized tests like the TOEFL to satisfy the English requirement. There are three major advantages to this kind of agreement:

1. Students who complete an intensive English program have actually used their English ability to succeed in an American classroom environment, not just demonstrated the ability to score well on a standardized test.

2. ELS students learn study skills such as note taking, outlining, and library research techniques, valuable skills for academically bound students.

3. The time spent studying in an intensive English institute can serve as a bridge between the student's home country experience and his/her American higher education experience, easing the transition between the two by giving students time and help in adjusting to cultural differences.

The ELS Cooperative program has proven very beneficial in facilitating student transfer to colleges and universities. The agreement is an ongoing, nonbinding agreement which can be terminated by either party at any time. It promises that both parties will fulfill certain obligations.

ELS will provide its college/university partner with:

(a) a half-page entry in the *ELS University & Career Guidebook*, an annually updated guidebook distributed to over 1700 counseling centers around the world;

(b) distribution of the school's catalogue and international student information to 100 select counseling centers in 40 countries and to all 23 international student advisors in the ELS centers in the United States;

(c) access for the school's admissions representatives to any of the 23 ELS centers for scheduled recruiting visits;

(d) country briefings, marketing orientations, key contact lists, and letters of introduction for the school's overseas recruiting official; and

(e) cooperation between the ELS placement service and the school's admissions office.

The college or university will cooperate with ELS by:

(a) recommending ELS Language Centers to students who are academically qualified, but lack the English proficiency for admission;

(b) issuing conditional letters of acceptance, contingent upon successful completion of the ELS program, to students who are otherwise admissible; and

(c) stating in their catalogs and international student promotional materials that completion of a designated level of the ELS program will meet the English language proficiency requirement for admission.

Thus, assisting each other in the recruitment of international students is the main focus of the articulation agreement between ELS and colleges and universities.

## The San Diego Experience

ELS Language Centers have articulation agreements with 92 California schools—18 four-year colleges or universities, 50 two-year community colleges, and 24 career schools.[2] The establishment of these agreements followed similar procedures.

Recently, the ELS Center in San Diego set up an agreement with Grossmont College in El Cajon, California. Initial contact was made through the biannual college fair at which 15 to 20 schools present their programs to ELS Language Center students. After college admissions and counseling representatives visited the San Diego center, they suggested referral of students to their college.

The desire was to increase the number of international students in the college. After visiting the center, reviewing the program, interviewing students, and meeting with ELS staff, the college representatives were confident that the students could succeed in their community college. They then presented the agreement for approval to their vice president of academic affairs. After review, the articulation agreement was signed.

A number of other schools in the San Diego area have followed similar procedures. Contact has typically been made with the ELS student advisor as students apply to schools, and with ELS staff at various National Association for Foreign Student Affairs: Association of International

Educators (NAFSA:AIE) conferences. Some campuses have also had experience with former ELS students who were admitted after submitting TOEFL scores. The fact that these students have done well recommends the program. Visits to the ELS center, observing classes, meeting with instructional staff, reviewing curriculum and course objectives, and talking with other institutions that already have articulation agreements with ELS have all been methods of learning more about the ELS program.

Depending on the student's intended course of study, applying to colleges and universities with articulation agreements is an attractive option. Students are counseled at ELS regarding colleges in the area and their admission requirements. Students generally already know that some schools will accept completion of Level 109 in lieu of the TOEFL. The student advisor at ELS also guides students through the application process. A critical element of the student's application is an academic report, or transcript, of grades and attendance of all classes taken at ELS. This report serves as the official recommendation of ELS that the student is ready to begin college or university level classes.

## Potential Issues and Problems With Maintaining Articulation

Occasionally, problems occur which need to be resolved through improved and ongoing communication between the two institutions involved in an articulation agreement. An evaluation of student progress also allows the ELS center to make changes in its program if needed.

In one experience we had in San Diego, an admissions official at a San Diego area community college reported that a particular student had not been adequately prepared. A review of the student's records showed that the student had completed Level 107, not 109, and had been accepted at the college through the submission of a TOEFL score of over 450 (the minimum score required by the college). It became clear from this experience that when articulation agreements are in place, it is important to distinguish between students admitted through articulation and students admitted through other processes of acceptance.

Another community college, San Diego City College, had for many years accepted students who had completed Level 108 at ELS. During the period that this agreement was in effect, the college admissions officer reviewed applicants' academic reports from ELS carefully and consulted directly with the ELS student advisor and academic director. When the admissions officer moved to another community college, her successor did not maintain such close contact. In addition, the college's programs and the ELS student populations were changing. Many students completing

Level 108 were no longer adequately prepared. Instead, completion of Level 109, with its higher graduation requirements, should have been required for this college, but since communication had not been maintained adequately, the problem was not recognized in a timely way. The situation then was further complicated by the fact that the admissions officer at that college was also accepting students based on nonstandard criteria, thus confusing the issue of which students were accepted through articulation and which by other means. Because of the lack of communication, as well as the miscommunication, the articulation agreement between ELS and this college was terminated.

Another of our articulation agreements was changed when one private San Diego university, National University, raised its standards for all incoming students by placing a greater emphasis on writing skills. As a result of meetings with admissions officers, several changes were made in the San Diego ELS program. The research skills class was increased from 20 to 40 hours of instruction, a greater emphasis was placed on the writing component of the Level 109 exit exam, and completion of Level 109 rather than Level 108 was recommended for undergraduate-level students. In this case, in contrast to the previous instance, we were able to maintain the articulation agreement by adjusting the ELS program to fit the changes at the university.

## Conclusion

The above examples show how agreements can be jeopardized, maintained, or even strengthened. From our experience, it has become clear that changes in student populations, admissions personnel, and institutional standards must all be watched carefully to ensure the quality of students referred. Articulation agreements are maintained through ongoing and systematic communication about these changes, involvement of the center directors, student advisors, academic directors, and instructors, as well as consultation with partner institution's admissions officers, counselors, and faculty. This communication can then lead to continuous improvement of the IEP program, and to continued confidence in the articulation agreement. Because these sorts of articulation agreements are so vital to the ongoing success of a private IEP like ELS, they have and continue to receive intense focus and commitment from our staff and administration. ■

## Endnotes

1. The official name of this center is "ELS Language Centers/San Diego." For ease of reference and understanding, it is referred to here as "the San Diego ELS center."

2. These 92 schools are part of the cooperative program. Nationwide, 298 four-year institutions, 172 two-year colleges, and 83 career schools have articulation agreements with ELS (Krongold, 1996).

## References

Krongold, H. (Ed.). 1996. *University and career guidebook*. Culver City, CA: ELS Educational Services.

The CATESOL Journal

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# In Their Own Voices

In our attempts to improve the articulation of ESL students across the segments, we often overlook the most obvious and in many ways the most reliable resource to help us improve what we do—our students. The following narratives by ESL writers in California schools describe the educational lands they have traveled through, how far they have journeyed, and how they have weathered the journey. These accounts provide important insights into what we as educators are doing well and what we can do better; they also underscore the critical need for increased and continued articulation.

## Method

To collect a range of ESL voices from elementary school to university, I asked two teachers from seven levels to have their students write a paragraph of no more than 300 words. The levels are elementary, middle school, high school, adult school, community college, the California State University system, and the University of California system.[1] The students represent a variety of geographical areas as well as differing backgrounds, ethnicity, and years in the United States. They were asked to address the following prompt:

> In the space below, print or type a paragraph about your experiences in learning English in public school in California. Please limit the paragraph to 300 words. Begin by introducing yourself. Give your name, the language you speak at home, the number of years you have lived in the United States, and the number of years you have attended school in California. Then, include information about the kind of education in English you have received. Some points to consider are the types of English classes you have had, the preparation you have had to move from one level to the next, your successes and frustrations, and what has helped you the most.

From the writing received, I selected two samples from each level which best addressed the issues. The writing appears as it was written; I have edited only for length.

### The Voices

Some students speak directly to the issue of articulation, stating how their previous classes did or did not prepare them adequately. Others imply the presence of or the need for better coordination between levels, with comments about such issues as placement or the ability to change levels as needed. Still others talk about course content and techniques, letting us know what goes on at one level that has a direct bearing on the next.

#### Elementary

**Kalda, 3rd grade:**

*I am in the third grade. In school we speak English. At home I speak Cantonese and English. I have lived in America for 9 year. In school I have learned English because when I was in kindergarten I was so scared. My kindergarten teacher taught me to learn alphabet. In first grade I learn how to spell words. In second grade I learn how to read in third grade I learn how to write and I learn a lot of things in third grade.*

**Linda, 5th grade:**

*I was born in Fresno, California. When I was a little kid I didn't know how to speak in English. My family all speak in Hmong. When I was four year old I had atten'led school in California. It was pretty hard to speak other people words like in English. Also I thought I would never learn all of the words A, B, C and 1, 2, 3 . It always get harder and harder on every grade I went up. I never knew I could become so good at writing papers and reading and also doing math but it also got gooder and I also got better.*

#### Middle School

**Thien, 7th grade:**

*I speak Vietnamese at home. I have been in the United States for two years and attended in school for almost two years. I now received ESL 5/6 advanced for English. When I was in sixth grade I received ESL 3/4 for English, to me the class is kind of easy. In my class, our teacher connected our assignment as a game for us to learn more easily. I'm trying to kept my grades as high as possible in order to move to a higher level like ESL 5/6 I'm*

*having right now. I am successful in reading but frustrated in speaking. I'm successful in thinking but frustrated in explaining. In sixth grade I had learned how to spell different words just like preparing for seventh grade. Right now I'm able to spell really well in the spelling part.*

**Jing-Fei, 9th grade:**

*I can speak three languages at home: english, spanish, and chinese. I have lived here in the united states for four years and have attended school in california for four years. My experiences after learning chinese and spanish was to start learning a new language, which is english in public school in california. The kind of education in english I have received was ESL (english as a second language) class, which was for bilingual people. The preparation I have had to move from one level to the next was to pay attention and work hard in the class to go to a higher level, have a better challenge, and learn more english. My success was to learn english so I could communicate with other people, and the frustration I had was to keep a person from acting what I wanted to keep an assignment from being carried out. Something that has helped me the most in learning english was the dictionary in which to help me to find words that I didn't understand and find the meaning of it. Now I am a trilingual person and I can talk to a lot of people.*

**High School**

**Marcela, 10th grade:**

*I was born in a small town called Cantabria in the state of Michoacan, Mexico. The lenguage I speak at home is Spanish. I being living in United States for five years. When my family and I came to this country, we wore living in Arlington, Texas. I went to an elementary school in fifth grade. For me it was a different world because the lenguage, the people and the cultures wore very different to the ones I have. All I did at school was by myself, because I could not express my feelings. Five months later, we moved to Oxnard, California. I went to another elementary school. In this school the 6th grade was easy, because in my class, the teacher separated all students that did not speak English. Then, I went to junior high. All my classes wore in Spanish because no one speak English. I loosed all those three years in not learning English. Then I went to high school. Here in high school everything is different, because I start to learned English and all students are in their English level they need. The only reason that maked to keep up going was that finally I understood the importance that is to learn English, specially when the students like me are citizens, because their future belongs to this country and to the goals we have for the future.*

**Xiao, 11th grade:**

*I'm from China, I speak Mandarine at home. I have lived in U.S. for 3 years. My first ESL class was at Sacramento, CA when I was in 9th grade. Now I'm taking sheltered English and sheltered U.S. History. I stayed in ESL for 3 years, during those 3 years, I really enjoyed learning English. I think that giving an ESL class for those immigrants who had just came to U.S. is very good idea, and a good way to learn English. In ESL class, I don't fell as nervous as in other classes, because in ESL class everybody is not native English speaker, no body speaks English well, so every body can concentrate with each other, and build speaking skills. In ESL I learned easy and basic English and then to medium and high level, by this way I learned and understand a lot of English. In ESL, I fell like I live in a family, because every body is very nice to each other, and the teacher is just like my parents, helps me on everything I don't understand. One thing I dislike in ESL is that in one classroom, there's too many students, and there's only one teacher teaching. Most of the students have different kind problems, and one teacher is unable to help out all of them. I hope that school will 2 or more ESL class seprate all ESL students into different class, so that would lot easier for teacher to help each student. Last thing I want to say is we should thanks for those teacher who has being teaching ESL class because they've doing a even more hard job than other teachers.*

**Adult School**

**Amsale:**

*I am from Ethiopia, Africa. My native language is Amharic. I lived in the USA for one and a half year. It is less than a month since I started attending this school. I was required to take a placing test. Sort of abtitude test. In fact the test was not difficult but the language used in the passages, the terms used in the mathematical problems made the test hard for me. So I was advised to attend the ESL class mainly the language lab. Most of the time we learn comprehensions both with the teacher and computer. I took that class for only one week and I quited because it is too simple for me. I didn't want to waste my time. Though the TOEFL class is same as I took in my country, it still differs in a way. I think it is important in many ways. I very much appreciate the teachers because they have the eagerness and the patience to teach. I have been taking English lessons for over twelve years but I still don't know English yet. I love the English language, I want to speak fluently and be comfortable in writing. I want to master the language but I never did*

**Jose, United States:**

*United States, the place I was born but barely remember because I was raised in my parent's country, Mexico. First of all, the language was the first obstacle. I came here as one self-sufficient person, to live my own life. The first frustration was in the moment when I went to the school of English in order to take classes and somebody gave me an evaluation test. I was so nervous and I couldn't answer well. So that person sent me to the first level. That angered me because I had learned English during my first six years of life living in the United States. I was resigned to stay in the first level during the year, but the teacher encourage me to move to the next level. I felt really excited in the other classroom, trying to communicate my experiences with the others students in the class, until the teacher started to say it doesn't matter if we can't communicate each other, the most important thing is to understand, because she said that we, the immigrants who came to United States to work, just need understand and serve. That angered me more, so my purpose was to learn English, and I moved up again from that class. In the next level the situation was quite different, the teacher encouraged me to learn and to express my own opinions, doesn't matter if I spoke correctly or not, I just tried. Now, after almost eight months I'm taking the highest level in the community college the TOEFL class, and I think in a few more months I will able to go to college.*

**Community College**

**Darid, 1st year:**

*I'm just one more of the many persons that have had ESL classes. I was born in San Diego, California. But as many children from Mexican parents, I was taken to Mexico to live with my family. The language that I speak at home was only in Spanish and my only course of English was the radio or the television. I always wonder how would be the life on the other side of the border. After I finished my junior High School in Tijuana, I moved to San Ysidro. My knowledge about English was very insignificant. but I wanted to do something with my life. I started the tenth grade in Southwestern High School. Were I got my first classes of English as a Second Language. After I got my first level of English I realize that it was to easy for me. They made me do a test to pass to the next level. I proved myself that after you practice in your writing and speaking it make more comfortable to understand it. After being in intermediate level, we were told in order to be successful in the study of English you have to be constant in your effort to understand it. Every little rule that you learn, you have to practice, in order to understand it. As soon you pass from Advance ESL to Regular classes in English you*

*realize that with a little of work you are in a level that is acceptable in any institution. I'm grateful about the classes of ESL I have had, because help me out a lot in the understanding of this new world for me.*

**Mina, 2nd year:**

*I came from Korea and I speak Korean at home with my parents. For the first time, which I got here, I had full of dream and excitement, but many times I had frustrations because of English. As soon as I got here, 4 1/2 years ago, I attended ESL courses about a year. At that time, I didn't realize how much I earned from the courses, but while I attending a college, I realize that I have basic knowledge of speaking, writing, and listening. I know that without ESL courses, I must had more difficulties in my college years. It is because, I learned how to write, speake, and listen in the courses, and I had to study for the next level. Even thought I took ESL courses, most of the time, I spoke Korean in the class, and outside of the class. There were many Korean students, so we rather spoke Korean than English. It didn't help my English speaking at all, yet we helped each other, under better understanding. After I got certificate from the ESL, I entered 2 years college. I took several English classes with good English speaker students. Most of the time, the instructors were so understandable. They all understood my situation, and I visited them often for help my English skills. I think the best way learning English is to visit and ask instructors.*

**California State University System**

**Xing-Qin, 1st year:**

*I speak Cantonese and Lon-duh in my house must of the time. I been living in the United states for more then ten years. I begin with my education in California started back with the English alphabet. I am now working on my Bachelor of Science Degree in California State University of Sacramento. I am having some difficulty in learning English because it is not my first language. Even thought I had received a lot of special helps while I was taking English course for some reason I am unable to keep I learn most of the time. When I was in elementary school, I had attained a ESL tutor session other then that I was also placed to study English with the first grader. Even thought I was learning English like every kinds that was to start from the very beginning materials, I was unable to absorbed what I was teach. It was because I was lacking a translation of what I was learning back to my first language in order to understand it. The lacking of basic knowledge of English I was unable to further use of what I know. During junior high, I attained another ESL English class. During junior high I*

*started to meet more foreign students, I started to see the success of most of them at able to use English as a normal American kids which started to build up my self essitem. Then during my eight grade, I was finally placed in a lower English class. But once again, I was placed back to another ESL class when I reached high school. The pattern of my English learning is a shift from ESL classes to regular English then back to where I started again, ESL class.*

**Alberto, 2nd year:**

*I speak Spanish at home because my parent are Mexicans and they do not speak english at all. I have been attending school here in california for ten years. But I still can not speak a perfect English because I do not practice it at home or outside of school. I have attended school the same number of year that I have lived here in the united states which is ten. When I started attending school I was enrolled in a bilingual class where they teached English and Spanish at the same time. Then I was transfered to an ESL class in their they thought me how to read and write and also how to put phrases sentences and essays together. Then I was transfered to regular english. But in that class I had some problems at the begining because I was being thought english. But the class that has thought me the most has been the ESL class I learned how to read and write in there. Now here in college I have been in ESL class for three semesters. It has helped me tremendously because now I feel that I can finally write a good strong essay with no run on sentences nor fragments. My frustrations have been failing English courses and my success has been passing them.*

**University of California System**

**Daniel, 1st year:**

*I speak Spanish at home. I've lived in the U.S. for seventeen years and have attended school in California for eleven years. When I returned from Mexico, as a child, I was enrolled in second grade and placed on the ESL/Bilingual Program. My mother was the one who chose this program for me, as she had a choice, and I'm very glad that she did because it has helped me make the transition from Spanish to English easier. From then on, I adopted quite well to the language. As a freshman in high school, a teacher saw my grades and achievements and placed me in Honors English with my consent. I have also passed the UC Subject A Examination on my first try. The problem that I begin to see in my writing—now that I'm in college—is that sometimes I write unclearly. I may try to say too many things in one sentence. As a child, learning English was easy, and fun, because it was like*

*translating Spanish into English and English into Spanish. Because we took out time in studying visual flashcards and reading along in books while narrators read them through our earphones, learning English was a well-paced, and enjoyable pleasure for me; a pleasure of understanding the interesting environment around me. I am certain that I would have had a much more difficult time learning English if I hadn't participated in an ESL program.*

**Thomas, 1st year:**

*My original language is Vietnamese. I have been in the United States for almost five years. One of the most arduous struggles was my first year in high school. It was the hardest time I had because I had to learn a new language. I had to start off from scratch because I had no knowledge of the English language. I had to learn ten worlds a day through exercises and symbols. For example, My ESL teacher gave me a picture of a cat and showed me how to write and pronounce it. I also learned other things through symbols such as traffic signs and animals. I still remember when we learn about animals we had a change to visit the zoo, which was very practical and beneficial. We learned from what we say. I liked the way my high school teacher taught me. She somehow clearly put the words in my memory. It took me about two years to get up to "regular" English. From there on, I learned more about literature. Through all these years, I always embarrassed myself by mispronouncing words and speaking with weird sentences structure, I got frustrated when people laughed at me because of all these things but the only way I could learn English was by making mistakes. I always have faith in myself and willing to strive to be better. It's very tough to learn a new language fluently but only a challenge can bring out the best in you.*

## Observations

These samples reflect only a very few of the many L2 students who have moved and are moving through California public schools. However, even this small sample offers lessons, among them that we ought to talk more often to our students and attend more closely to their experiences, not just in our individual classes but at all levels of education in our state. Their comments directly relate to issues of intersegmental articulation, both in the sense of formal agreements between sending and receiving institutions and in the broader sense of communication and collaboration among California educators who serve L2 students.

**Articulation of Levels**

Several students speak about the progression they perceived as they moved from one class to the next. Linda for example said, "It always get harder and harder on every grade I went up," but in fact we know that no agreement exists about what students need as they move from level to level. Xiao says, "In ESL I learned easy and basic English and then to medium and high level." We need a way to describe *easy* and *basic*, *medium* and *high* levels that educators can use in common across the state, and we need a curriculum that moves students from one level to the next and that prepares students for the increasingly challenging academic demands they encounter at each new level.

As ESL professionals we need to be clear that our students can move not only through K–12 but onward into the colleges and four-year universities, so that we never say, as Jose's teacher did, that immigrant students, "just need to understand and serve." We also need to make sure that the articulation between bilingual programs and ESL or SDAIE programs are clear and that both parents and students understand the value of first language instruction in developing cognitive skills, so that they don't think, like Marcela, that the years spent in first language instruction are wasted.

**Articulation of Placement**

We also need to make sure that students are placed in the appropriate level of instruction, recognizing that students develop different abilities at different rates, or as Thien puts it, "I am successful in reading but frustrated in speaking. I'm successful in thinking but frustrated in explaining." Marcela is grateful that in her high school "all students are in their English level they need," but Amsala quit his ESL adult school class because it was too easy for him and did not meet his need to be able "to speak fluently and be comfortable in writing." Darid and Jose felt they were placed too low, but both triumphed through effort and persistence.

Students can, of course, be wrong in their perceptions about placement, but these students' words suggest that many students may not be placed correctly. As a profession we need to address their concerns, making sure we have valid and reliable placement procedures and a curriculum that is well designed to move students towards their goals, whether vocational or academic. As we know from the other articles in this volume, the current system is chaotic, with placement carried out in a variety of ways or not at all, with a lack of agreement about levels even between schools and certainly across segments, and with curricula that are as varied as the institutions that have created them.

### Issues of Reclassification

Xing Qin charts a pattern that is familiar to many ESL students: "The pattern of my English learning is a shift from ESL classes to regular English then back to where I started again, ESL classes." Because each level places more challenging cognitive and linguistic demands on students, a level of English proficiency that is acceptable at one level may not be sufficient at the next. Thus, students may move from ESL to regular English classes at one level and then be placed back in ESL classes at the next level. Again, articulation could improve this situation but perhaps never eliminate it, since the differences between elementary school, high school, community college, and university are real and since most L2 learners are not going to become indistinguishable from native speakers.

### Reexamining Language Acquisition Theory

However, Xing Qin's writing as well as the writing of many of the other students in this section also raises the issue that Lily Wong Filmore has called "the ESL lifer" (see Scarcella, this volume). Some of these students have been in California schools for a very long time, yet their progress in academic English has not been notably successful. As Scarcella suggests, we as a profession must look again at the language acquisition theories we base our teaching on and the pedagogy that we practice to see if we are indeed serving these students in a way that will really prepare them for the next levels of their education.

## Responding to ESL Voices

This volume suggests many ways in which the issues raised by these students can be addressed. *California Pathways* (see Browning, this volume) documents the experiences that L2 students encounter as they move through the levels of education in California and suggests practices that can facilitate that movement, based on the many local and regional articulation efforts that are contributing to improving students' experience in our schools. The ESL descriptors in *California Pathways* offer a way to begin developing a common language for talking about our students' proficiencies, which in turn can help us assess them well and design curricula that are well sequenced to promote their acquisition of academic English. Thomas concludes by saying, "It's very tough to learn a new language fluently, but only a challenge can bring out the best in you." We as ESL professionals face a challenge of comparable magnitude; with cooperation and perseverance, it can bring out the best in us as well. ■

## Endnote

1. My decision to include students from adult school was deliberate. While there is little to no articulation between that level and those which precede it, there is a strong link between adult school and community college, which in turn leads to coordination with four-year schools.

The CATESOL Journal

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